

THE
CITIES AND WILDS
OF
ANDALUCIA.

BY
THE HON^{BLE} R. DUNDAS MURRAY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TO

L O R D M U R R A Y

THESE VOLUMES ARE INSCRIBED

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF GRATITUDE AND ESTEEM

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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THE CITIES AND WILDS OF ANDALUCIA.

CHAPTER I.

CADIZ BY MOONLIGHT—THE MARKET-PLACE—GAY ASPECT OF
THE CITY—THE ALAMEDA—ANDALUCIAN BEAUTY—HISTORY
OF CADIZ—CHICLANA—BAROSA.

IT was by the beautiful moonlight of Andalusia that I first saw Cadiz. Leaning over the low bulwark of a rakish schooner, I rested my eyes upon the ocean city, at first not so much in admiration of the scene as with the satisfaction of being at length released by its presence from anxiety and danger. Our voyage had been an eventful one, and the little craft under my feet had run the gauntlet of various watery disasters ere it now glided

with the ease and grace of a sea-bird up the waters of the bay. Could it have spoken—and the crew declared it could do everything but speak—what a long yarn would it have spun as it recalled past scenes!—the collision at midnight, with its crash of rending timbers and moments of fearful suspense; the tempest that chased it into the nearest port, a dismasted and crippled wreck; and then, when the breeze was fair and all went well, the sudden squall that passed over with resistless strength, and bent it down into the waves to the verge of overturning.

After a month's listening to the roar of winds and waters, the calmness of the bay and the serenity of the night appeared something unnatural: perhaps the impression was aided by the aspect of the city, which wore, as it seemed to me, a strangely pale and sepulchral hue. Our vessel soon swung to its anchor, surrounded by shipping, whose black hulls and cordage chequered with shadows the silvery surface around them. In front lay Cadiz, no longer "rising o'er the dark blue sea" an indistinct white speck as I had first seen it, but a long low mass of monumental whiteness resting by the side of a moonlit expanse which was as calm as a

lake. Not a light twinkled from the dwellings, although the night was barely begun, nor did a sound come from them; all was as silent as the grave: yet "It is not dead, but sleepeth," we said of the city.

Morning came, with its sunshine and stir, but without the power, so it seemed, to awake the sleeping city. While the bay was traversed by objects in motion, ships coming in and others sailing out, and boats flitting across the surface, it displayed none of the usual signs by which cities in our climate announce the presence of a stirring population. There was no smoke rising into the air nor streaming away with the wind; no hum or murmur was to be heard; the outlines of its edifices and towers cut clear and well-defined against the sky: and as, according to our notions, a smokeless roof is a deserted one, the impressions conveyed by this prospect were connected with solitude and desolation in the streets we had yet to see. Yet, this apart, the aspect of the city was imposing; walled and bastioned, and showing lines of stately dwellings towards the bay, it looked just the place from whence fleets and armadas had departed, and where merchants had heaped up the wealth of princes.

Entering by the sea-gate, we pass at once into the market-place, where picturesque illusions and historic reminiscences speedily vanish amid its vulgar realities. Yet the scene, though always a commonplace one, is here animated and striking; its actors are arrayed in colours and draperies at once novel and pleasing to the eye, and which mingle together with pictorial effect. Those vociferating and gesticulating groups are clothed in brown cloaks, and shadowed by fantastic sombreros: their swarthy skins, coal-black hair, no less than their flashing eyes, proclaim them the excitable children of the South. They scream, they shout, and appear to be on the point of tearing the knives from their sashes to terminate their disputes, which, after all, are nothing more than bargainings. Above the clamour rise the voices of the venders of shell-fish and water; "Agua fresca,—fresca como nieve!" is drawled out by the latter with a long monotonous cry. "Is water actually sold by the glass?" exclaims the native of the rainy north, forgetting that as here cloudless skies prevail during the summer months, water becomes scarce, and, as a consequence, a luxury. Then, there are other features of the scene as strange and novel; droves of burros, with their tinkling bells,

passing through the crowd; or, mayhap, an ox-cart of antique shape slowly wends its way past; or a horseman, seated on a high-peaked saddle, bestrides a prancing steed with a flowing mane and tail; he is muffled to the eyes in an ample cloak, and by his side hangs a gun or carbine, bespeaking a land where each man must defend his property by the armed hand, or lose it. And who are those nun-like figures that mingle with the throng? A black drapery covers their heads and falls upon their shoulders; in many instances the rest of the dress is of the same mournful colour. That head-dress is the mantilla, and these are no nuns, but Spanish dames in their national costume. A moment's observation dispels the first impressions produced by their sad-coloured attire; those eyes, dark, lustrous, and eloquent, are fraught with no religious fire or feeling, but cast glances around—free, though not immodest—and in which there is felt to lurk a strange power; their symmetrical forms are developed by the close-fitting dress they wear; a tiny foot peeps from below; the fan in one hand is in a constant state of fluttering excitement; and thus arrayed, the “daughters of Cadiz” move through the crowd

with the wondrous grace of their country, and that step which no other land can equal.

Turning towards what seemed a narrow cleft in the line of houses encircling this scene, I entered the street of which it was the opening ; and while passing on to the Fonda Inglesa, had opportunity to survey the peculiar architecture of Spanish cities. Looking upwards, there were lofty houses with whitened fronts, dazzling to the eye ; balconies and various devices in bright colours diversified the exterior, and vied with each other in giving a lively air to their respective habitations : there was nothing of the sombre aspect I had been accustomed in fancy to associate with the streets of Spain ; every edifice appeared modern and new, or, if ancient, was painted “ up to the eyes ” like some withered cheek, the better to conceal the ravages of time. The whole effect was therefore gay and brilliant beyond description ; everywhere seemed stamped on the walls the wreathed smiles of a city of pleasure. Such, I believe, will be the first impression of every voyager on landing at Cadiz ; he is dazzled by the tinsel and Tyrian dyes in which it is arrayed, and imagines he has seen nothing so fascinating

among cities, or so like the creation of enchantment : in a few days he surveys it with sobered eyes, and then feels disposed to condemn as dreamers the poets who have sung, and the travellers who have rehearsed, its charms. The illusion, it must be owned, is very powerful at first, and is in no small degree aided by the aspect of the moving throng that peoples the streets : when sombreros, flowing cloaks, and mantillas decorate the figures in this varied scene—when each pair of masculine lips embraces a cigar, and each feminine right hand rattles a fan—it is hard to believe that a population so theatrically attired, and so strangely occupied, have not been conjured up to give effect to the gaudy façades before which they move, and are not destined to vanish when that purpose is answered.

A short hour will suffice to explore all that is worthy of being seen in the city, and to gain a sufficiently accurate idea of its position and internal structure. It is seen to occupy the wave-beaten extremity of a long and narrow peninsula, and to compress within a massive girdle of ramparts the dwellings of 60,000 inhabitants into the smallest possible space ; every inch of ground is valuable here, and broad streets and spacious squares are

accordingly eschewed, in order that as great a number of habitations as possible may be condensed within circumscribed limits. The effect of this, however, is to surround the observer wherever he goes with a wearisome glare of stone ; it paves the ground he treads, presses close to his vision in white or variegated masses, intercepts every distant prospect, and leaves him only the view of objects hard, angular, and rigid. The eye soon longs for some spot of verdure to gladden its sight, but searches for it in vain amid the stone-built city: on the alameda it descries a few dwarfed and sickly trees struggling for existence on the gravel-strewn soil ; a few more may perhaps be found in some deserted nooks, but neither sward nor flower-plot flourishes under them, nor anywhere breaks in upon the grey pavement that wraps the surface of this Elysium of pleasure. I have mentioned the word alameda: it is hardly necessary to inform the reader that this is a levelled space set apart for the paseo, or promenade, one of the most important divisions in the routine of Spanish life. Here it is placed on the eastern side of the city, contiguous to the ramparts, and, terrace-like, overlooks the bay and its shores studded with towns; among the lofty dwellings that partly encircle

it, there is one over which waves the British flag, and marks at once the site of the Consulate and a mansion famed for its hospitality.* As soon as the day begins to close, a tide of fashionables sets in through the various avenues leading to it, and after diffusing itself for a time in various eddies among the exterior walks, or pausing to rest upon the lines of stone benches that fringe the centre one, concentrates at last into a narrow stream that divides the alameda into equal portions. For an hour the current continues to flow up and down within the bounds established by custom; the young and old, the "girls of Cadiz" and their gallants, mingling in a confused throng, from which arises a murmur of lively voices. As group after group passes by, there is observable a wonderful similarity in the expression of their mirth as well as in their general appearance; the clear, shrill tones of the feminine speakers are incessantly ejaculating the most sacred of names; the same arch smile plays on every coun-

* Few Englishmen have ever visited Cadiz without experiencing the kindness and hospitality of the late Sir John Brackenbury, the father and predecessor in office of our present Consul there. I gladly embrace this opportunity of recording how much I am indebted to him for his assistance in facilitating my subsequent wanderings through Andalusia, by the means which his official position commanded.

tenance; the fan is toyed with by all with the same careless grace, and flutters more or less in proportion to the animation of its owner; the same quick movements of surprise or delight are everywhere elicited by the sparkling nothings of the Gaditanian *petit maître*, whose treble runs like a discord among the other sounds. Amid all these displays there is, however, nothing boisterous or unfeminine on the part of Cadiz' daughters; their liveliness, though wanting that subdued tone we deem essential to polished manners, is graceful and becoming in its flights; it is the overflow of spirits which, like the beautiful wild flowers of their own land, are stirred by the lightest breath of air, and, like them, give forth a pleasant rustle when so agitated. At the same time the traveller, if he has indulged in exaggerated notions of Spanish beauty, will here be taught in what it consists. Probably his final impression will be one of disappointment; and even he who has drawn in his imagination a less glowing picture of its charms, will find the reality fall short of his ideal sketch. If he has kept out the pure red and white and the eye of heavenly blue that mark the beauty of a northern sky, he has judged rightly; but after supplying their place with the pale or

dusky cheek of a southern clime, and its eye, which, whether it be wild or gentle, flashing or languid, is always dark, he will need to use his pencil with caution. In truth, the Spanish dame, as regards regularity of feature, and those charms which form beauty of countenance, must yield the palm to the dames of other nations; her attractions centre in her dark glossy hair and in those eloquent eyes, that unite with an ever-varying play of expression in making her wondrously fascinating. In beauty of form, however, she reigns alone; nothing could be more symmetrical or more exquisitely rounded than the shapes of the Gaditanian belles, as they glided or floated—anything but walked—through the mazes of the gay crowd on the promenade; indeed, the Andalusian grace is proverbial in Spain, and the traveller must confess that he has never beheld elegance of motion until he has stood upon an Andalusian alameda. What it is, can hardly be described by words; it is beyond the power of language to describe those slow and surpassingly graceful movements which accompany every step of the Andaluza; her every attitude is so flowing, and at the same time so unforced, that she seems upborne by some invisible power that renders her inde-

pendent of the classically moulded foot she presses so lightly on the ground.

Meanwhile, the concourse begins to diminish; group after group drops away; the line of promenaders contracts to a narrow thread, and finally disappears entirely, leaving the alameda deserted by all but a few who find attractions in its quiet nooks. The stream has, however, only disappeared to rise again in another quarter: the Plaza San Antonio is now the scene to which the shifting throng has transferred its perambulations; and here, beneath the light of lamps, it paces round the limits of the square, which till a late hour is alive with the sound of moving feet mingled with bursts of merriment, and other tokens of a pleasure-loving people.

Cadiz, like many of the seaports on this coast, may lay claim to the remotest antiquity. Its name has descended to us from the Phœnicians, who called it Gadir, a word which is supposed to have signified in their tongue "a bulwark," and might be well applied to the rocky point on which it stands. That maritime people, half merchant, half corsair, quickly perceived its advantages as a defensible post against all who might be powerless at

sea; and, confident in their acknowledged supremacy on that element, were not slow to make the barren rock their own. Here they raised fortifications, and founded a temple which was dedicated to their own divinity, Hercules, the god of the strong hand. From hence it was not difficult to push their commercial enterprises northwards, having now so safe a haven and a rock-built sea-fastness at their command. Voyages more distant than any they had before contemplated were undertaken, even to that Britannia, whose shroud of mist and fogs they were the first to pierce. It is curious to note how the path of commerce has in all ages remained the same, and how that from the West to the East is trodden by the greatest of modern commercial nations in the very footsteps of the ancient people who, without chart or compass, boldly followed it in their course from the East to the West. The halting-places of both nations are likewise nearly the same: Gibraltar is to Britain what Cadiz was to the Phœnicians; it is the half-way-house upon the route, established at the point where danger and delays are most to be apprehended. Malta, in like manner, was a post of the Phœnicians; and thus, while we plume ourselves upon the possession of these impor-

tant stations for our fleets, the acquisition of one of which was the result of a random stroke of war, we pay an involuntary tribute to the wisdom and foresight of the seafaring people by whom they were secured, and each one made the basis of commercial operations.

When the Phœnicians ceased to be merchants and navigators, Cadiz passed into the hands of the Carthaginians, who not only succeeded their parent nation in its maritime greatness, but developed, to an extent unknown before, the resources and power of commerce. It shared, however, the fate of the Peninsula on the triumph of the Roman arms over the mistress of the seas, and became a Roman city in the year 203 B.C. Henceforward it is known only as one of the richest commercial emporiums of the empire. But long after its absorption into the Roman dominions, this city appears to have retained in its manners and customs many traces of its Oriental origin; then, as now, the usages of the East were too congenial to the climate and character of the people to be eradicated by a change of masters from the soil in which they had taken root. Even in the matter of amusements, it seems to have imported the

wanton dances of the East; for these it was once as famous as it now is for its cachucha and fandango, both of which are indisputably derived from an Oriental source. To the latter, which may be, and occasionally are, danced in a fashion far from decorous, the modern censor may still apply the words in which the Roman satirist reproved the indelicate displays of the Gaditanians in his own age; the "*de Gadibus improbis puellæ*" have preserved but too well not a few of those free movements which called forth his indignant rebuke.

Under the Arab domination, Cadiz sank into obscurity; its position placed it out of the line of Arab commerce, which was exclusively directed towards the East and the states of Barbary. Hence the ports on the Mediterranean, such as Gibraltar, Malaga, and Almeria, being the principal outlets for Andalusian manufactures, monopolised the whole traffic with other countries, and rose to a corresponding degree of eminence. When, however, by the discovery of America, the path of commerce turned towards the West, Cadiz could not fail to become the emporium of the new world, and to enter upon a new era of prosperity. From

the moment that the treasure-laden galleons began to discharge their precious freights on its quays, it assumed the first place among the ports of Spain, and, notwithstanding the defection of the American colonies, still continues to retain that position. In the wars between Britain and the Spanish monarchy, no town suffered so much as this; its semi-insular situation particularly exposed it to the assaults of a nation which long and successfully contended with the Spanish navies for the supremacy at sea. The first of these attacks occurred during that period of exhaustion which overtook the Spanish empire upon the destruction of its invincible Armada. That mighty armament was merely the last effort of expiring strength, and on its overthrow "Spain with the Indies" lay prostrate and helpless at the feet of her maritime rivals. Her southern shores were ravaged with impunity by the Barbary corsairs, who landed wherever they chose, wasted her fruitful soil, and carried into captivity all whom the scymitar spared. The traveller still sees on the bold headlands along the shores of the Mediterranean the remains of the atalayas, or watch-towers, from whence a smoke ascended to give notice of the approach of the

Moorish vessels, and warn the wretched inhabitants to flee inland. Her northern and western coasts were in like manner swept by the fleets of victorious England. Either in privateering expeditions they lay in wait for and captured her galleons, or, disembarking bodies of troops, assailed her sea-ports and wasted them with fire. It was in an expedition of the latter nature, only eight years after the wreck of the Armada, that Cadiz was stormed by the English forces and taken by the sword. Among the commanders in that successful exploit were Sir Francis Vere, Sir Walter Raleigh, and the Earl of Essex. It was a subject of debate whether the town should be held by an English garrison; and Sir Francis Vere offered with four thousand men to maintain it against all enemies, but his proposal was rejected, and the town, after being in the possession of the invaders for fourteen days, was abandoned. The same fleet on its return to England landed on the coast of Portugal, and seized the town of Faro in the province of the Algarve. There they found the valuable library of Osorius, who was bishop of the place: this they conveyed to England and bestowed upon the

newly-erected library of Oxford.* It was again assailed in 1702 by a fleet under the command of Sir George Rooke, but without the success which attended the former expedition. The repulse was, however, amply avenged by the capture of Gibraltar two years subsequently.

To Cadiz may be applied Dr. Johnson's definition of a ship; it is a prison with the chance of being drowned. On every side but one the sea washes the foundations of its walls, which secure it as much from the assaults of the turbulent element as from the ravages of a foreign invader. On the western side, which confronts the Atlantic, a wild scene of warfare is visible whenever the ocean is agitated by storms. The rocky slope at the foot of the ramparts is then white with the breakers that roll up towards the walls, and dash with stunning noise against their solid masonry. At such times, every projecting angle is enveloped in a cloud of spray, which falls upon the interior in cascades of brine, and seems to bode the entrance of the billows that storm without. The sound of this wild uproar penetrates into the centre of the city, and makes itself

* Sir William Monson's Naval Tracts.

heard even in the interior of the houses. During the hours of darkness, the effect is peculiarly imposing. If, as Silvio Pellico says, “*svegliarse nella mezza notte è cosa tremenda*,” how much more striking is it to waken at midnight, and hear the silence of one’s prison broken by the clamour of an adversary that thunders at its gates without pause or rest! The stillness he deems so awful is then rendered doubly impressive by the distant roar of a warfare which the listener • fancies is fraught with peril to himself. Yet these dangers are more apparent than real. Cadiz is founded upon a rock, and, however loudly the Atlantic may rage, is seated upon too sure a foundation to be in dread of its waves. On one occasion, however, its citizens trembled for their own and the city’s existence. During the earthquake of 1755, by which the greater part of Lisbon was laid prostrate, the sentinels on the walls of Cadiz descried the sea, at ten miles’ distance, rising to the height of sixty feet above the common level, and the huge billow thus formed advancing with great velocity towards the city. At this sight the whole population were seized with dismay, and, apprehending the total submersion of the town,

rushed with the soldiery towards the gate which leads to the low isthmus connecting the town with the main land. Happily, the governor was a man of sense, and perceived the danger of this step. He ordered the gates to be closed, so that few succeeded in gaining the isthmus. Meanwhile, the gigantic wave reached the shore, and dashing among the rocks with a terrible crash, spent its force there ere it reached the walls. It was, however, strong enough to demolish these, and to remove some pieces of heavy artillery to a distance of a hundred • feet, and then, sweeping into the town, inundated the lower portion of it. Little damage, however, was done, and the only loss of life occurred upon the isthmus to which I have alluded. All who had retreated there were overwhelmed by the waters and drowned.

Along this isthmus is conducted the road to Chiclana, the summer resort of the Gaditanians. At all seasons of the year the communication is kept up by omnibus, while, at the same time, it may be reached by water; but, declining both these modes of conveyance, I started, on a clear wintry morning, to traverse the distance on foot. Passing out by the land-gate, I shortly gained the noble arrecife, or

causeway, formed on the narrow strip of land that here divides the waters of the bay from those of the Atlantic. On the right hand the deep blue tide stretched far into the horizon, unmarked by sail or shadow; but on the other a variety of objects mingled with the liquid expanse to diversify the prospect; shipping of all nations were crowded together at one point; at another a little flotilla of fishing-boats were spreading their picturesque lateen sails to the wind; along the winding shores in sight, white towns and villages seemed to hang upon the edge of the waters, and to be on the verge of sliding into them; and inland, bold sierras completed the background. As I increased my distance from Cadiz, I passed in succession the outer line of fortifications and forts by which it is defended, and, after a walk of six miles, entered the town of La Isla. A broad street is all that is worthy of notice in this place; which, though suffering from the vicissitudes of fortune, still boasts of a population of thirty thousand souls. From La Isla there extends towards the south a bleak tract of salt-marshes, dotted with pyramids of salt, which is here formed in large quantities by evaporation, and stored up in that shape. The road, however,

avoided this marshy region, by turning to the east, after having crossed by the Puente de Zuazo, the Santi Petri river: the latter stream is, however, more properly to be termed a natural canal between the ocean and the Bay of Cadiz, and, as it cuts across the peninsula upon which that city stands, may be said to convert it into an island.

By the circuitous route taken by the road, Chiclana is six miles distant from La Isla. It is altogether unworthy of its position as the chosen retirement of the Gaditanians during the summer months, for its dirty and dilapidated condition presents a striking contrast to the clean and well-paved streets and the handsome edifices of Cadiz. Not far off, however, is a spot to which every Briton will turn with interest: the field of Barosa lies to the southward, and I did not delay long to pay it a visit. Taking with me Napier's account of the battle, I wended my way through the pine-wood which skirts Chiclana on the west and south; and crossing the broken plain that lies between it and the fiercely contested heights, ascended the latter by an easy slope: this terminated in an abrupt steep towards the sea, on the edge of which stood a roofless and dilapidated

hut, once a vigia or watch-tower. Here it was evident that the thickest of war's tempest had descended; the walls, both on the exterior and interior, were covered with the marks of bullets and shot, not yet obliterated by the lapse of more than thirty years: indeed, so lightly had the finger of time touched the ruin, which was probably the work of that day, that the names and remarks of those who had visited the battle-field immediately after the event, though written in pencil on the walls, were yet fresh and legible. From this spot the course of the fight could be distinctly traced. On the west was the sea, bounded by a line of steep cliffs, at the base of which, however, a firm sandy beach afforded an excellent road for troops. If they pursued this route in a northerly direction, their march would be stopped at the distance of four miles by the channel of the Santi Petri River; but at the mouth of this a flying bridge had been constructed, and the passage therefore into the Isla could be effected without difficulty. It was towards this point that the allied force of Spaniards and British was tending on the day of battle, their march being directed along a route which kept them about two miles from the

beach. There was, however, no slight danger in this movement. Marshal Victor, with nine thousand troops, was in the woods of Chiclana, and so nigh that he could fall with ease upon the rear of the force crossing the bridge, and probably bring it into a disastrous conflict, as, from the nature of the ground, there was but scanty space afforded for the defence of the passage. Under these circumstances General Graham proposed to La Peña, the Spanish commander-in-chief, to hold the height of Barosa, which he justly argued was the key both to defensive and offensive movements: so long as it was occupied by the allied force, no advance could be made by the French, as in that case their flank would be menaced by the detachment on the height. La Peña, however, replied to this reasoning by ordering the British commander to march straight for the Bermeja, a low ridge about midway between the Barosa height and the bridge. This Graham obeyed, in the persuasion that a division of Spaniards was to remain at Barosa; but scarcely had he entered a wood in front of the Bermeja, when La Peña moved off with his Spaniards towards the Santi Petri bridge, leaving only a weak rear-guard to protect the baggage. The French general, who

had watched this false step from his forest-lair, immediately sprang forward upon the prey he now deemed his own. While one brigade, under Laval, was directed against the British, another, commanded by himself in person, ascending the Barosa height, dispersed the Spanish rear-guard, captured three of its guns, and bore hard upon the small British force which was left to protect the baggage. Upon notice of the attack reaching Graham, not a moment was lost in countermarching to meet the enemy; but when he reached the plain the key of the field of battle was already in their possession, while Laval's column was close upon his left flank. La Peña was nowhere to be seen. In such a strait, the British general felt that a retreat, if such were possible, would only aggravate the desperate position in which he was placed, and resolved, therefore, to attack without losing an instant. The troops were hastily formed into two masses, one of which marched straight for Laval's column, the other directed its course against the Barosa height. The former, by a fierce charge, broke the first and second lines of the French, and threw them into irremediable confusion; but a harder task awaited the second body. On the edge of the ascent they were met by

their gallant opponents, and for some time the victory hung in the balance: the fire of the British, however, prevailed; two French generals fell mortally wounded, and their troops were driven down the hill, with the loss of many soldiers. The British then stood triumphantly on the summit, masters of six guns, an eagle, two generals, both mortally wounded, and 400 prisoners; but having been twenty-four hours under arms, and without food, were too exhausted to pursue. "While," says Napier, "these terrible combats of infantry were fighting, La Peña looked idly on; neither sending his cavalry, nor his horse artillery, nor any part of his army, to the assistance of his ally; nor yet menacing the right of the enemy, which was close to him, and weak." It was a fit sequel to such unworthy conduct, when the Spanish general claimed the victory for himself, and his staff published inaccurate accounts of the battle, accompanied with false plans of the ground, in order to support their assertions. No reasoning, however, or falsification, could extinguish the fact, that not a Spaniard joined in the fight; while the loss of 1100, in killed and wounded, on the side of the British, attested its severity, and marked on whom the weight of battle

had fallen. I have mentioned that the watch-tower on the height bore many traces of the deadly fray around its walls. While roaming over the field of battle, I was surprised to discover other memorials of its fury, which, like the former, had resisted the effacing fingers of time. In the shallow ravines by which the field is broken, C—— and I found a couple of cannon-balls, which had probably lodged in their sides, and, being detached by the rains, had rolled to the bottom, where we picked them up, half imbedded in the sand. These we carefully preserved as mementos of a day so glorious to the British arms.

CHAPTER II.

PORT ST. MARY'S—BODEGAS—ROAD TO SAN LUCAR—BRIGAND
VIS-A-VIS—PLUNDERED TRAVELLERS.

EL PUERTO SANTA MARIA, or as it is more commonly called for brevity's sake, El Puerto, is, like many other towns in Spain, never seen to better advantage than when distance throws its veil over many accompaniments too matter-of-fact to be picturesque. For this reason, its best point of view is undoubtedly from the ramparts of Cadiz; and looking from the latter town across the bay, which is here some five or six miles wide, it was not difficult to imagine that the "port," with its white walls gleaming in the sunshine, was no unpleasing addition to the landscape on the opposite mainland. Between the towns a couple of small steamers are constantly plying throughout the day; and stepping on board one of these, in less than an hour I was at my journey's end. Before entering the mouth of

the Guadalete, which forms the harbour of the town, we had to cross a bar of very ominous character; and this undertaking, even by a steamer, is regarded as a hazardous attempt in bad weather. To small craft and boats the danger is much greater, especially at low water, or when a heavy swell sets in from the Atlantic. Should the reader attempt to cross it, as I once did, under these circumstances, he will learn what is meant by a boat being filled with water. Formerly it was usual for the boatmen to collect small sums from the passengers, in order to procure masses for the souls of those who had been lost amid the boiling surf; but since the introduction of steamers the custom has been abandoned.

Except the bodegas, or wine vaults, little is to be seen in the town worthy of note. These bodegas, it must be observed, are very different from the subterranean and rheumatic labyrinths in which it is our pleasure to immure the rosy god. Here they court the light and the sunshine, displaying broad fronts and lofty walls, and really are edifices of such extent and completeness in their arrangements as to rival the first of our manufacturing establishments. Entering one of them, you feel as if some "banquet hall

deserted" was now put to humble uses, for much there is to remind one of a higher origin ; the roof is high overhead, the walls ponderous and lit by narrow apertures, and from end to end you enjoy a clear view, interrupted only by the solid pillars by which the rafters are sustained. All this height and magnitude of proportion is designed to compass the same object for which we construct underground cellars ; in both cases the purpose is to maintain an uniformly even temperature—with this difference, however, that in Spain a fiery sun must be excluded, while in our own rugged clime the enemy to be dreaded is excess of cold. It may sound strangely to call the bodegas manufactories of wine ; yet the term is not inappropriate ; the wine is stored in long ranges of casks piled over each other tier above tier, the uppermost invariably containing the fruits of recent vintages. As the contents of the lower casks are drawn off, more is added from the upper ones, so that a system of constant replenishing is at work, and on no account is a cask ever drained to the dregs. Hence the lower tier contains the produce of various seasons, all blended together by this process of admixture. Up to this stage of its manufacture the wine is free from foreign ingre-

dients ; the next step is to add brandy, to infuse strength—boiled wine, to give any shade of colour that may be desired—richer and older wines, to impart flavour: and when the taste of the market has been thus satisfied, the mixture is called sherry. As a wine-exporting town, the reputation of Port St. Mary's is but of yesterday. Not long ago, it was merely the shipping port of Xeres, from which it is distant about ten miles ; but now a great deal of business is transacted by the enterprising merchants who first saw the advantages of its situation, and its prosperity seems manifestly to be on the increase. As far, however, as regards the finer kinds of wines, its older rival must still bear away the palm.

On the edge of the suburbs to the westward stands a spacious convent, in days of yore the property of St. Dominic; but, alas! a mightier than he in Spain has turned him out of house and home, and his patrimony is now the spoil of the state. Seeing the gate open as I passed by, I walked in to ascertain to what uses the place had come to at last; for since the suppression of the monastic orders, the greater number of the convents have undergone the strangest of metamorphoses, in all of which there is

to be traced an utilitarian character, very much at variance with the precepts and practice of their former occupants: the majority are converted into hospitals, jails, lunatic asylums, penitentiaries, barracks, and so forth, while a few minister to the wants of the mind, having risen into universities and museums. The building was one of those gloomy, prison-like edifices, with massive square towers at each angle, such as the old Italian masters loved to introduce into the background of their scriptural pieces. The place seemed quite deserted, so I wandered unquestioned through the courts below, and from thence up to the corridors that gave access to each cell. On the basement story I passed into what had evidently been the refectory, a lofty though rather narrow apartment, and as void of ornament as every other part of the building; but it was clear that the fathers no longer feasted there. At the furthest end a wooden stage rose above the floor, and was flanked by certain screens called wings; while a dingy piece of drapery depended from the roof, and was intended to represent a curtain: in short, the wicked world had helped itself to the room, and had transformed it into a theatre. Projecting from one of the

sides of the apartment was a pulpit, to which there was a passage by a dark staircase in the wall. Here one of the holy fathers at meal times was wont to read a homily, or passages from devout books, for the edification of the brotherhood as they devoured their commons in silence. As I squeezed myself with difficulty up the narrow passage, I could not help admiring the wisdom of the fraternity in causing the office of reader to be discharged by the most recent member of their community. Common report gave them the credit of living on the fat of the land, and hence it was pretty evident that none but the latest, and consequently the leanest among them, could thrust his person up that narrow flight of steps with any hope of reaching the top.

When all the sights had been exhausted, C—— proposed visiting San Lucar de Barrameda. This is an ancient town, situated at the mouth of the Guadalquivir, and in the brighter days of Spain was rather famous as a seaport. It was not far off, being some twelve or fifteen miles distant; and the road was said to be tolerably good—at least for Spain—we resolved to make our way to it on foot. But in Andalusia, where such a thing as pedestrianism is altogether unknown, our choice excited as much

astonishment as if we had proposed a pilgrimage to Mecca. To speak the truth, I rather imagine our sanity suffered in their estimation, for once or twice I caught the exclamation, "Que locos Ingleses!" But in this quarter of the world Englishmen have the reputation of doing all sorts of odd things; and if this was one, I consoled myself by thinking that I was keeping up the national character. On a clear, bright morning, therefore, towards the end of January, we bade adieu to Port St. Mary's, and soon found ourselves beyond the odours of its narrow and ill-paved streets. We carried arms, as all must do who have no particular fancy for hearing "Stand and deliver!"—a kind of salutation not uncommon upon the roads in Andalusia, and most usually addressed to the unarmed. Against interruptions of such a nature we deemed our double-barrels a sufficient protection, though many of our friends strongly recommended the precaution of taking in addition some armed attendants. At that period, indeed, so great was the insecurity of the road we were about to follow, that the common mode of traversing it was after the fashion of a caravan. At a certain hour assembled all the travellers whom fate commanded to make use of it; they then placed themselves

under the protection of an escort, more or less numerous according to the height of their fears or the number of the party. Thus fortified, the procession sallied forth, and wound its way onwards in fear and trembling; and if it reached its destination unassailed, the event was a subject of congratulation to all concerned. For our own part, we rejected all assistance, being influenced thereto by sundry reasons of moment: first and foremost, we had little to lose, and cared less whether or no it departed from us; and in the next place, we well knew that, whatever might be the bold bearing of an escort, too often its practice was to show valour on every occasion but the one when it was most required. Outside of the town we halted to load our guns. Looking back, the view that presented itself was of a high order of beauty. Afar off to the right was Cadiz, rearing its glittering spires at the termination of the long low promontory that carries it far into the sea. In the distance the sandy strip which links it to the mainland was lost to view; and all alone, in the midst of the waters, stood the bastioned city, severed by a broad sheet of dark blue from the shore, and seemingly left to the mercy of the Atlantic. On the side nearest us were spread out

the waters of its noble bay, which lay at our feet calm and silent as a lake. A few sails sprinkled its burnished surface; some seeking distant ports, but most of them hastening to mingle with a forest of masts which, deep in its bosom, marked the anchorage for shipping. Upon the mainland, the eye ranged over a level country, terminated by the picturesque sierras of Moron and Medina Sidonia; their rugged peaks clothed in that hue of dusky purple so peculiar to Andalusian mountain scenery, and which the rays of a warm sun were unable to dispel.

For the prospect that invited us onwards so much could not be said. We soon lost sight of the ocean, and entered a wilderness of growing wheat, stretching away on every side for many miles, and as destitute of habitation, tree, or shrub, as the most wintry desert. At the same time the road became a mere track, so that the vehicle which carried our luggage was compelled to make long and tedious detours, in order to avoid the impassable gulfs that yawned at every step. Half-way stands a venta, or inn, said to bear but an indifferent character, being, according to report, the resort of such brigands as infest the road. For their purposes the

situation is admirably adapted. It stands upon a slight eminence commanding a view of the road on both approaches for a long way, thus giving them ample time to scan the strength of parties travelling, or to make off if danger is nigh. Seeing a peasant at the door, I walked up to him to inquire if any robberies had taken place during the morning. Guessing my purpose, the man came forward, and, without waiting to be questioned, informed me that there was "no novelty"—such being the delicate phrase used in Spain to intimate that there had been neither robbery nor murder on the route. Had I put the question a few hours later, he would have returned me a different answer, as the sequel will show.

Not far from the venta, we encountered the convoy from San Lucar. It consisted of eight or nine calesas filled with passengers, the whole preceded by a couple of horsemen armed to the teeth with carbines, pistols, and cigars, and looking the beau ideal of stern resolve. If the reader knows not what a calesa is, let his imagination picture a machine of a very antique cut. The wheels are high, supporting a body like that of a cabriolet, the sides and back being, however, daubed scarlet or

yellow, and adorned, besides, with strange imitations of fruits and flowers. Throw over this a veil of cobwebs, blue mould, rust, mud-splashes of two or three years' growth, and a calesa is then in character. The turn-out, however, is not complete till you have placed between a couple of short straight shafts a lean and withered Rosinante, who steps along to the music of hundreds of small bells which decorate its head and neck. The driver is scarcely less fantastic than his vehicle. He wears a short brown jacket, the back and arms of which are inlaid with cloth of various gaudy hues—scarlet, blue, and yellow being predominant, so that his upper man has much the appearance of a harlequin; next come calzones, usually of black velvet, and open at the knee; while gaily-embroidered leggings of calf-skin, lacing up the outside of the leg, and a conical hat with a spacious brim, complete the costume. There is no seat provided for him, and he therefore sits on the board at your feet, singing, talking, and plying his whip, with a most sovereign contempt for everybody's comfort but his own.

As we proceeded, the road began to improve a little. A gang of galley slaves was at work upon it—squalid and scowling wretches; some bearing on

their heads baskets of sand from a pit hard by, while others were spreading out the material, not with spades or other instruments, but solely with their naked hands. As we passed them, one accosted us in French, begging a cigar or two to lighten his task. On inquiry he proved to be a native of "la belle France."

"Why are you here?" was our next question.

"For nothing to speak of," said he, shrugging his shoulders most characteristically; "pour avoir tué un douanier."

Leaving these miserable outcasts a long way behind us, the country became as wild a solitude as ever. The only object to arrest the eye within a circuit of many miles was a straggling olive-grove, spreading its dusky foliage over the brow of a low ridge about a mile to our left. As we were looking upon it with something of that interest with which the voyager amid the lonely waste of waters eyes an approaching sail, on a sudden, a couple of horsemen started out of its shade, and crossing the country at a rapid gallop, made straight for the road in our front. Such a manoeuvre was too strange not to excite our suspicions; all the tales we had heard about banditti and so forth flashed across our minds

as we coupled their sudden appearance with the route they were taking. In the hope of satisfying our doubts, we turned to the conductor of our luggage; but Juanito, though extremely talkative, became wonderfully silent on this occasion. "They might or might not be *ladrones*; how was he to know?" That they had, however, some evil purpose in view soon became a matter of no dispute; for, disappearing behind a slight acclivity, behind which the road wound, they were seen no more, though, from the pace at which they were going, they ought to have emerged the next minute into the open ground on our right. It was evident that on the reverse slope of the acclivity before us the suspicious strangers had halted, and that there they intended to await our approach.

In this dilemma we called a council of war. C—— was for marching on; I was of the same opinion, for a couple of men did not give us any concern; but our difficulties arose from the apprehension that they might be scouts stationed to give notice to a larger party concealed from our view: nevertheless, at all hazards, we determined to proceed, knowing that, however outnumbered, yet with arms in our hands we might come to reasonable terms.

On reaching the summit of the acclivity I have described, our relief was great, when, on looking down, we descried but two horsemen, and these the same we had seen before. About thirty yards to the right of the road they had come to a halt, with bridles in hand and carbines resting on their saddle-bows, ready for instant action. As we descended towards the spot where they were posted, it was pretty evident that they watched intently every step that brought us nearer: still no sound or gesture broke from them to indicate a hostile purpose. Perhaps the cocking of our guns as we came in front—a very disagreeable sound when you know the bullet is destined for yourself—may have had its effect; but at all events they thought it better to let well alone as long as a leaden messenger could reach them. To do them justice, they were as fine a pair of cut-throat vagabonds as one would wish to see; not well enough dressed to be heroes—for I am sorry to spoil the romance of the thing by adding that they were rather out at the elbows; but, on the other hand, their steeds were capital, and in the best condition for exploits on the road. Altogether, with their slouched hats and dark visages, they had the air of men equally well disposed to thrust a hand

into one's pocket, or a knife between one's ribs, and whose certain end was a halter or a bullet. As long as we could catch a glimpse of them they were still motionless, and fixed to the same spot and attitude; but as we plodded onwards an intervening ridge hid the place from sight, and we were once more alone on the road. In a short time the white houses and terraced roofs of San Lucar appeared in the distance, to announce the termination of our march; and in the course of an hour we found ourselves without molestation in the best inn it affords.

After a couple of hours spent in strolling about the streets, we returned to our dinner, which we had ordered to be placed in the coffee-room of the inn. We had scarcely sat down to it when the door was hurriedly bust open, and a man with a countenance brimful of importance rushed into the middle of the room.

"Have you heard the news, señores?" said he, addressing himself to the whole party, who stared aghast at the interruption. "Three calesas, coming from Port St. Mary's, and full of passengers, have just been robbed! Here they come!" he added, hearing the rumbling of wheels outside; and darted away as abruptly as he had entered.

We followed him with no less speed to the gate of the inn, where were drawn up the plundered vehicles, surrounded by a crowd eagerly listening to the narrative of the disaster. Two or three of the despoiled travellers were also there, lamenting over empty pockets, and watches and purses departed to return no more. One of the party, a colonel in the army, in the grief of his heart took to bed, and would not be comforted. It is true he was a sufferer to some extent, his loss consisting of a watch valued at fifty pounds, and a new cloak—an article of apparel which in Spain is rather costly. From him we obtained next morning an account of the circumstances attending the robbery.

It appeared, from comparing notes, that they were stopped not far from the lonely spot selected for performing a similar operation on ourselves. The mode by which it was effected was rather curious. One of the escort having lingered a long way behind, there remained but another man to guard the convoy. On a sudden three men on horseback galloped up: nobody could imagine from whence they came, though I believe they had concealed themselves under a bridge that spans a shallow stream crossing the road. Without pausing, or

testifying any sinister intentions, the new-comers merely interchanged the "Vaya usted con Dios," or "God be with you," the invariable salutation of travellers in Spain, and passed onwards at the same pace. The next moment, however, they returned, sending before them the ominous words, "Boca abajo," or "Down upon your mouth." At these dreaded sounds the affrighted travellers, colonel and all, threw themselves with their faces on the ground, knowing too well the consequences of disobeying that terrible mandate. In a trice they were relieved by unseen hands of everything of value; and being sternly told not to stir, as they respected their lives, remained in that helpless posture for some minutes.

In the meantime their solitary man of valour displayed the highest discretion: he put spurs to his horse and rode off; but whether he retired to save himself from the fate of his plundered charge, or whether he went to summon his companion, is a point he alone can clear up. Certain it is, however, that the two worthies returned only when the mischief was done, and pursuit fruitless. All that they did was to raise up the prostrate travellers, and point out to them in the distance the figures of the robbers, who were scouring over the country at the

top of their horses' speed. From the description furnished us by our informant, we did not entertain a doubt that the couple who a few hours previously had attempted to try our nerves were concerned in this attack. One of them, we remarked, wore a white hat; and such of the travellers as dared to steal a glance, remarked the like on the head of one of their spoilers.

Subsequently the two increased their number to eight or ten, and spread the greatest terror over this and the other roads in the vicinity; but although I had occasion to traverse them more than once, by night as well as by day, I was always fortunate enough to escape without challenge.

CHAPTER III.

SAN LUCAR DE BARRAMEDA—ITS COTO—DEER-SHOOTING—
EL PALACIO—THE STRAYED CAMEL—LUCKY HIT.

THERE are two towns in Andalusia that bear the sainted name of San Lucar: the one styled, for distinction sake, “La Mayor,” or the greater—so called because, like *lucus á non lucendo*, in reality it is *not* the greater—and the other, the town of which I now treat. This has also its sobriquet, being termed “Barrameda,” and, of the two, best sustains the credit of its patron: at all events, there are observable in it fewer symptoms of decay; and this remark, as applied to Spanish towns, is tantamount to awarding them the palm of excellence.

It is certainly a fine old place, full of remembrances of other scenes and times; guarded both within and without by gloomy old convents, all the gloomier now since their life has departed—if indeed that could be called life that wore its weary chains

behind gratings and walls, and was dead to the hopes and fears, the joys and affections, of mortality. It is here that the Guadalquivir, or the "great river" of the Arabs, finishes his course; and the town spreads its dwellings for the twenty thousand inhabitants it is said to contain, partly on a narrow flat bordering the river, and partly on a rising bank overlooking its broad tide and a wide prospect to the north. From all points its situation is highly picturesque—particularly so as you approach it by the water, and see houses rising above each other in terraces mingled with spires, towers, and gardens.

From the earliest date this seaport was of some note in the maritime history of Spain. On the sandy beach that forms a firm pathway to Bonanza, about a mile higher up the river, the Roman galleys were wont to be drawn up; and by Roman superstition a temple to Hercules was erected near Chipiona, a small village a league distant to the westward. Previous, however, to their coming, the Phœnician and Carthaginian mariner might have been seen on the strand in busy trade with the rude Celtiberians, and trafficking his wares for the precious metals and stones, for which Spain was then as famous as

was its own Peru in later times. More recently still, when the power of the Arabs was in its zenith, this remote haven was visited by the terrible Northmen.

After having been the scourge and terror of the northern seas, their fleets descended to this low latitude; and, undismayed by the two thousand miles of stormy distance that rolled between them and their homes, and forbade every hope of succour, the bold Sea-kings disembarked here, and carried fire and sword far inland. In their progress, they ascended the river as high as Seville, which they sacked and burnt; and, laden with spoil, returned to their ships. The discovery of America, however, did more than anything else to swell the fortunes of this place, which became for a season the resort of the treasure-laden galleons. Its citizens, in consequence, waxed great, and prospered, though somewhat at the expense of their fair fame—or else Sancho Panza has sadly calumniated them, when he styles their town a den of rogues. These were its golden days, departed never more to return. Since that epoch, so fatal to Spain's resources and dominion, when her American colonies burst from the hands that vainly strove to retain them, the

sights most common in the towns that once participated in the riches of the New World, are empty warehouses, and quays overgrown with grass. San Lucar, among the rest, has cause to mourn that the wealth of the Indies now flows into other channels; a few coasters now suffice for its trade, its custom-house is the mansion of solitude, and its merchants are a paltry few. In one respect, however, it may be said to have become a gainer by the change, as in point of character it is now no worse than the neighbouring cities; the vultures no longer scent the galleons.

The first object which C—— and I visited was the old Moorish castle, which rises from the brow of the slope by which the upper is divided from the lower town. Our knock at an old tottering gate was answered by a wild-looking youth, who came forth from some nook in the courtyard, and shouldered one of the leaves aside. While engaged in this work, which was one of some time and trouble, his teeth held a crust of bread, which he stopped now and then to gnaw and tear, somewhat after the style of a wolf at its meal. As soon, however, as the gate closed behind us, the spirit of hospitality fell upon him: with that grace which all Spaniards,

the lowest not excepted, display on such occasions, his morsel of a crust was extended towards us, and, making a low salutation, he pressed us to share it with him. We declined his offer with as much formality as if it had been to the banquet of a grandee, adding the customary formula, "Buen provecho," or "Much good may it do you." Then following him across the courtyard, we ascended to the top of a huge octagonal tower, whose battlements overhang the steepest part of the bank. From the summit, which had been converted by the French during the War of Independence into a station for a telegraph, we cast our eyes over a wide prospect. On every side but one a tame and uninviting landscape presented itself; for the view ranged over chalky fields in the immediate vicinity of the town, to flats of a sickly green higher up the river. But directly in front, and on the other side of the Guadalquivir, was a tract of forest land, that, from its singular contrast to the surrounding scenery, instantly arrested our eyes. "That," said our guide, "is the Coto of San Lucar; it is a despoblado, and extends backwards from the river for seven or eight leagues; a lonely place it is, and as full of deer, wild boars, and mountain cats, as the sea is full of

fish; *vaya!* in all Spain there is no better place for game than the Coto of San Lucar." As we were still gazing on the scene, which struck me as coming nearer to my impression of a wilderness than anything I had hitherto seen, the sun shone out strongly from behind a cloud, and showed us that it was a region of sand. Here and there the sandy particles were tossed into yellow hillocks, but generally a growth of low forest and underwood clothed the surface; and the whole was the hard-won gains of time, wrested during the lapse of ages from the Atlantic that thunders on the west, and still threatens to recover its lost domain.

"Wild boars and deer!" said C——, as we were cautiously descending the broken staircase of the tower; "what splendid sport! a day's shooting there would be an event in one's life."

Although little of a sportsman myself, I cordially echoed his wish: my acquaintance with Andalusia having been as yet confined to its ancient cities and still more ancient roads, I was anxious to see something of its wilds; and this desolate expanse of sand and forest—a fragment, apparently, of some African desert cast by a convulsion of nature on the shores of Spain—was just one of those solitudes

with which the province was said to abound, and which I had long desired to explore. We exerted ourselves therefore to obtain the necessary permission to use our guns within its bounds, for, as it by name implies, the Coto is a preserve, and was at the time rented by a party of gentlemen from its proprietor, the Duke of Medina Sidonia; ere long, through the kindness of a friend, our wishes were gratified.

The day previous to our departure was one of busy preparation on the part of C——, who, from the style in which he ordered in provender, seemed to regard our few days' sojourn in the Coto as something akin to wintering at the North Pole. Before nightfall the floor of our apartment groaned beneath a pile of hams, bread, sausages, and other viands, which he eyed with the satisfaction of a mind now at ease: however, after we started, the thought flashed across him that pepper and salt were forgotten—and, true enough, these condiments were wanting. The discovery was the subject of many a bitter lamentation, until we found that the Coto could supply all these articles and many more; and in truth his provident cares were wholly unnecessary, as our guns furnished us with the sub-

stantial requisites for a repast, and everything else was to be obtained at the lodges at which we took up our abode. The above formed a load for a "macho" which was to serve as our beast of burden; its conductor was a barefooted youth, half sailor half landsman in costume, and I believe in vocation; and all being arranged, at two o'clock the next day we were in the ferry-boat that traverses the river. The huge lateen sail was hoisted by a couple of half-naked boatmen; and, a brisk wind blowing at the time, in less than ten minutes our keel touched the sand on the other side. A few steps in the deep sand quickly shut out from view our place of landing; and while the noise and bustle attending our getting on shore was still ringing in our ears, we entered a solitude deep and unbroken except by the sounds we ourselves created. We had passed into a wood of pines—not the tall and stately giants of my own land, but a pigmy race of misshapen trunks and twisted limbs. The fantastic contortions of the sylvan throng had a singular effect, and almost led imagination to believe that they imbibed some poisonous potion from the barren soil on which they grew, and were writhing in pain from the draught.

Keeping the river on our right hand we toiled through sand for more than an hour, and then broke off sharply to the left, conducted by a path that dived into the depths of the wood. After we had plodded on wearily for some miles, sometimes by sandy mounds bared of vegetation, and sometimes wading through shallow lagoons, dusk began to deepen the shade of our forest covert; still there was no prospect of the lodge where we were to be housed for the night. By and bye, in answer to our repeated inquiries, it came out that our attendant had only been once before on the track, and that long ago; next he admitted that he might have mistaken it; and finally confessed that he must have done so. This was unpleasant news, particularly as night was coming on; but after consulting for a few moments we determined to push on, as it was probable the path would terminate at some dwelling: at the same time we were far from relying with confidence on such a hope, for we knew that in this region houses were few and far between, and after all we might miss them in the dark. However, it was our only plan, except retracing our route, which we felt no desire to do; and, as the event proved, such a step would have

been the most unfortunate for us. We had proceeded only a mile farther when the sound of scattered shots was heard in the distance; the reports gradually drew nearer, and at length a party of seven or eight sportsmen came into view, bending their steps in our direction. They proved, as we anticipated, to be a party of the lessees of the preserve: some were C——'s acquaintances, and, after the usual explanations and inquiries, we joined their numbers. It was a fortunate circumstance for us our meeting with them; it appeared we had overshoot our destination by three miles, and there was no other roof within a nearer distance than twelve or sixteen. As yet I had never made my bivouac in the open air, and had looked forward with some misgivings to the possibility of such an occurrence: subsequent experience, however, relieved me from these apprehensions, and I am bound to confess that many a worse couch have I found than among the wilds of the province; a grassy plot was all I needed, and then, wrapped in my manta, the exquisite summer night of Andalusia my only roof, and while the air was fragrant with the perfume of the wild flowers, seldom have I courted sleep in vain.

Night had completely closed in before we reached our habitation. On the way we were introduced to Manuel Toro, the guarda or keeper of the preserve. Manuel was a spare though sinewy little man, with a keen dark eye, and a countenance expressive of as much openness and honesty as could be thrown into a set of features that were far from regular. He spoke, like many of the lower orders of the province, with a thick guttural accent—a peculiarity he probably inherited from his Moorish ancestors; to us it was new and strange, and we experienced considerable difficulty in understanding his speech, and in comprehending his directions when we were afterwards under his pilotage. Housed and refreshed, dinner in due course made its appearance. Many and various were the dishes handed round, and though on the whole we contrived to make a substantial meal, there were not a few preparations that would have driven a Ude or Soyer frantic. One still comes across my memory like a nightmare; it was the sopa. In a huge copper caldron, which occupied the place of a tureen at the bottom of the table, I descried a thick pasty substance, which, on inquiry, I was told was the soup; it was brought to table in this fashion—the caldron being the vessel

in which it was boiled—in order to be eaten in all its perfection. As far as I could ascertain, bread sodden in hot oil formed the foundation of the mess, to which garlic moreover lent its odours; the surface was garnished with poached eggs resting upon a stratum of wild asparagus, a vegetable which those who have once tasted will not speedily forget, the apples of the Dead Sea being scarcely so bitter. C—— and I were the first to be supplied with a liberal portion of the uninviting compound. As the fumes of it ascended to our nostrils, we cast rueful looks upon our plates and at each other, which could hardly have escaped the notice of our entertainers, had they not been too busily engaged in despatching their own shares: long before ours disappeared, the majority had been helped twice or thrice to this dainty, and, in fact, the caldron was not dismissed until it was completely emptied. For ourselves, after the first dose, we escaped pretty well, by alleging, for want of a better reason, that it was not the “costumbre” in England to be helped twice to soup. There is a wonderful power in the phrase “*es costumbre*,” as the traveller in Spain quickly learns. He finds it, in his way, sometimes a stumbling-block, sometimes a valuable ally. In-

quire the origin of some popular superstition, or usage of society, and lo, "*es costumbre*" appears as a satisfactory explanation ; or point out how things may be improved, and how they are managed better or differently in your own or other countries, and you have for answer a quiet shake of the head, with the words "*No es costumbre aquí.*" In truth, few Spaniards trouble their minds with investigations or reasonings on these matters ; generally speaking, they are contented with treading in the footsteps of their ancestors as regards national usages ; and if they display a love of change, it is rather in the political world than in those customs by which society is governed. This clinging to the past is unquestionably a national characteristic, and to it we owe the fact that Spain is at this day, perhaps, the most interesting country in Europe.

Her daily life is, as near as can be, the same that is painted in the pages of Cervantes or Lesage ; in all that we see or hear, we are constantly reminded of their descriptions : and though at first it is difficult to conceive such a thing, we are brought to confess that we behold a state of society such as it existed 200 years ago ; the roads, the inns, the robbers, the salons, serenades, picaroons, compliments, are in fact

altered so little by the lapse of this long period, that one can hardly describe them without appearing to copy from the immortal works of these authors. The effect of this upon the observer is at first rather singular: having been long accustomed to consider the scenes and characters in "Gil Blas" and "Don Quixote" either as the creations of fancy or delineations of a past age, he is unprepared for their constant occurrence around him; he is struck with surprise to find men thinking and acting in a way nowise differing from that of the fictitious personages with whom he is conversant, and for a time can hardly credit his senses, so unreal does everything appear. After this impression wears off, there remains the conviction that Spain is the land of incident and adventure; a conviction that deepens the more he mingles with its people, and, as a spectator or actor, is introduced to strange passages—far stranger than any that have sprung from the imagination of her novelists.

Dinner over, coffee was introduced, followed by cards, the never-failing resource of an evening in Andalucia. Knowing little of *tresillo* or *monte*, we left our friends to the enjoyment of their favourite games, and took the opportunity of ad-

journing to the kitchen, where a bright fire of logs was blazing on the hearth. Here were assembled Manuel and his family, busily engaged in preparing the double barrels for the morrow's sport. With the former, whom he found to be as communicative as he could desire, C—— kept up an animated discourse touching the noble science of woodcraft as practised in these regions. I refrain from giving the information he imparted, as the description of what took place on the following day will convey to the reader a sufficiently correct idea of the mode by which the deer are hunted in the Coto. In the course of the conversation, Manuel called in an old deerhound, who came up to him with the confidence of a favourite. Its neck was covered with scars, with each of which was connected a tale of prowess he delighted to tell. This veteran of the chase appeared feeble and stiff, and scarcely able to crawl, from the effects of wounds and old age; but on remarking this to Manuel, he bade us reserve our judgment until we saw him in the field, "For, though old," said he, "he is a beast of much fire" ("Mucho fuego tiene, mucho"). In size and shape he was altogether different from the deerhound of Scotland, partaking very much of the appearance of

a mastiff, and in no points approaching to the wiry and powerful forms of the Scottish breed.

The day was roused, when the morrow came, not with the sound of the echoing horn, but after a fashion which, once prevalent in the Highlands, I was surprised to find existing in temperate Spain. An attendant waked us by presenting a cup of strong waters—for the purpose, I presume, of fortifying our nerves for the coming onslaught. Immediately after breakfast we left the lodge: a picturesque and sequestered retreat it was, and one more to the taste of the sportsman could hardly be conceived. It was a long low building, occupying an opening in the heart of a woodland scene. At one end was the accommodation for the sportsmen—a sitting apartment, and two others fitted up with camp beds after the fashion of a barrack; the other end was the property of Government, and, as an inscription testified, was a station for carabineros, or the preventive service. Surrounding it was a narrow carpet of green sward, diversified by a shallow lagoon on the west, and a few scattered wild fig-trees, whose silvery stems had a striking effect in contrast with the sombre mass of pines that formed the background. In a few moments

we lost sight of this oasis of verdure—for an oasis in truth it was, being speedily environed by woody knolls. While we are winding in single file along the path—a goodly company of eight or ten horsemen, not to mention as many followers on foot—I shall embrace the opportunity to describe the costume and equipments of the former portion of the party. Yesterday, at table, they were peaceful citizens, clad in the modern garb; now they sit on their saddles, their outward man so altered by means of sombreros, jackets, and scarlet sashes, that the stranger might readily imagine them to be a horde of bandits proceeding to their rendezvous. First, however, and foremost rides Manuel, his upper man clad in a zamarra, or black sheep-skin jacket, a red sash wound round his waist; his nether man is encased in brown shorts and leathern leggings; beneath the sombrero he has tied round his head, as is universally done by the peasantry, a bright coloured handkerchief, the ends of which float over his shoulders. Then follow the señores, who are similarly attired, with some unimportant variations only as to the colours and material of their costume; to this some add a gaudy Valencian manta, usually of a flaring scarlet or yellow; this at present rests upon the

saddle-bow, but when need is, may be converted into a cloak, blanket, or coverlet. All and sundry of the hidalgos shoulder a double-barrel ; one or two desperate characters, however, carry a brace, with ammunition in proportion, and in the folds of their sashes there is generally thrust a cuchillo del monte. This latter is so useful a weapon, and so well fitted for the sports which place life and limb in jeopardy, that I am surprised it has not been adopted by those lovers of danger who glory in giving battle to the wild tenants of the jungle or backwoods. The "mountain knife," for so it is called, is a kind of dirk rather more than a foot in length ; the haft, which is a few inches long, is round, and tapers away gradually so as to admit of being fixed in the muzzle of a gun. In fact, it is a revival of the bayonet in the earliest stage of its invention, which was simply a weapon like this thrust into the muzzle of a musket : the modern fashion of fixing it was a later improvement ; and some of my readers may remember the name of that battle with which the last century opened, wherein a British regiment, while advancing to the charge with the old weapon, was more than staggered by a heavy fire thrown in by their opponents, who for the first time used the

musket after the improved mode by which a volley could be discharged while the bayonet was attached to it. As a substitute, however, the cuchillo in the mouth of a gun is not to be despised, and would make a formidable weapon in the hands of the sportsman who might be attacked by a wounded beast of prey before he had time to reload.

On we went in silence, among a succession of hillocks and hollows clothed with dwarf pines that emitted a delightful fragrance—next toiling for many furlongs through smooth and bleaching sands, and once or twice crossing shallow ponds of no great extent. On these occasions a laughable scramble would ensue among the followers for places at the croupe of the equestrians: those who succeeded sometimes exemplified the truth, that it is as difficult to keep as it is to attain an exalted station; for the animals to which they clung, sometimes disliking the double burden, managed to unseat them by kicking and plunging, and off they rolled into the water amid the merriment of the party. Manuel at length halts, and proceeds to dispose of his forces for action: for that purpose he used no words, as silence was enjoined, lest

the game might be scared, but a multitude of nods and signs, which we translated into English the best way we could. Giving our horses in charge to the attendants, the whole party followed him stealthily, and one after another took up their stations at spots he indicated, and always under cover of a bush, tree, or bank. C—— and I were the last to be placed, and formed the extremity of a wide semi-circle of ambushed sportsmen. After placing us about fifty yards apart from each other, and cautioning us to lie quiet until we heard a shot in front, and by no means to fire into the interior of the circle, lest we might injure some of the beaters, he departed by a circuitous route to join his followers, and aid them in driving the deer in our direction. Presently the signal sounded, and we waited long in breathless silence, with our expectations wound to the highest pitch. At last several shots were heard in succession, coming from the centre of the crescent, but in our quarter not a leaf was stirring. Suddenly a small herd of hinds and fawns appeared on the crest of a sandy acclivity in our front, and dashed down towards a narrow glade that lay between the thickets in which C—— and I were respectively ensconced. On catching a glimpse

of the former they wheeled towards my side, again retreated on seeing me barring the way, and at last halted between us in the greatest perplexity. As they were thus huddled together, nothing could have been more easy than to have disposed of one or two of them, but such would have been an infraction of the laws of the chase, which forbids a shot being fired at any but bucks; they were therefore permitted to pass without molestation. Soon after Manuel rode up and informed us that the ambushade was at an end. The whole party of sportsmen then joined us, their Andalucian vivacity nowise damped by their ill-luck—for they had missed everything at which they had fired—and in a body we moved off to another locality; here a second circle was formed, the same precautions as before being used. As far, however, as we were concerned, our patience was exercised to no purpose; the shooting was almost entirely confined to the centre of the line, towards which the game appeared invariably to incline. C——, I believe, got the chance of a shot, which he lost through a misadventure: he was fortifying his patience by the aid of a cigar, when a buck bounded past him; hastily raising his gun, it touched the cigar; the cigar

burnt his cheek; and, as a consequence, his shot smote off the top of a tree some ten yards distant.

Yet there was much around and above us to compensate for our want of sport; there was the picturesqueness of our positions, always varying in their character; sometimes stretched on the flat summit of a mound of drifted sand, and commanding a mingled scene of open smooth sands and tangled thicket; or crouching behind a crooked pine in the bed of a deep ravine, shut out from day by the bristling arms and sombre foliage of the masses that clung to the sides; then again there was the utter stillness of nature, into which we plunged ere the voices of our companions had scarce rung out of our ears; and to crown all, the warmth of the February sun, which, unlike that of northern climes, set the blood in motion, and communicated to the air a freshness and elasticity that braced every nerve. With what an exhilarating effect did it breathe upon our spirits, causing us to look upon everything with an eye of enjoyment! All this more than repaid us for our long watchings and our oft-repeated negatives to the inquiries of our Spanish friends if game had crossed our stations. On the other hand, a strange fatality appeared to accompany their firing: from first

to last they discharged forty or fifty shots without touching a creature; and from what I heard the deer sometimes brushed past so closely that it was a matter of surprise how it was possible to miss them.

On one occasion I was roused to the *qui vive* by an extraordinary commotion among the bushes in front of me; the boughs parted and snapped as if some ponderous animal was ploughing its way through them. Doubting not that the patriarch of the herd was to come forth, I raised my gun for a steady aim, but it was only to behold the rolling eye of one of those half-wild bulls that roam at large among the scattered pastures of this waste. His eye was speedily attracted by the scarlet hue of my sash, one of the virtues of which colour, as is well known, is to provoke the ire of bulls. Accordingly he stamped, pawed the sand, and laid his head to the ground with so much malice prepense in the fiery glances he shot, that I was strongly tempted to send him a bullet in return. I contented myself, however, with a passive act of hostility in reply to these ominous demonstrations, with what in polite parlance would have been termed a decided cut. I feigned not to perceive him, but the ill-mannered brute would not take the hint; he came up to the other

side of the bush that separated us, and while I retreated round it, followed at my heels, occasionally jerking his horns into the air after a fashion that intimated as plainly as language itself, that he was enjoying by anticipation the pleasure of launching my person from them. How long we might have continued to revolve round the bush I know not—probably till one or the other dropped down from giddiness; at length a shot fired close by caused him to desist and dart off at the top of his speed.

It is from the animals who wander in this savage state over the wide flats bordering the Guadalquivir, or amid the unprotected pastures of the interior, that the bull-rings of Seville and the other towns of the province draw their supplies. Those who are destined for this butchery in sport are allured from their native pastures by means of tame oxen, and the united herd of wild and tame animals is driven to the pens adjoining the ring; here the bulls are parted from the others, and each one confined in a separate crib. Those, however, whom it is designed to slay or secure are caught by pursuing the following method, which I describe as it was told to me. The vaquero, mounted on horseback, and wielding in his right hand his garrocha, or goad—the same

weapon which the picador uses in the arena—gives chase to the animal he has selected from the herd. Fleet though it be, and of a race of first-rate leapers—for I have seen some bulls clear the barrier of the ring, the height of which could not be less than five feet—his Andalucian steed soon overtakes it: when sufficiently near, he plants the point of his goad close to the root of its tail. Watching his opportunity, he then manages by a well-timed push to tilt the animal forwards; on thus being thrown off its balance, it stumbles, and finally measures its length on the ground. Ere it has recovered from the suddenness of the fall, the vaquero is on his feet beside it, ready to bind it—which he finds no difficulty in doing—or to dispose of it in whatever manner he thinks fit.

It was late ere we bent our steps towards our quarters for the night. The gaiety of our Andalucian friends was no whit diminished by the fact that they had expended no inconsiderable amount of powder and shot, for which “no returns” were forthcoming. C—— and I, however, relieved our feelings, which were of a different nature, by grumbling a little, more especially at being always placed at the wings of the semicircle, which were confessedly the worst

places for sport; but, in justice to Manuel, it is but fair to add that in this matter he could have no option. The others were his masters, and to them of right belonged the best places.

The amusements of the day were, however, not yet concluded. At a short distance from the lodge, preparations were made for assailing another description of game, whose traces we had frequently encountered in the course of our movements. These were the wild boars and swine of the Coto: I call them wild because they were so denominated by our friends, but in correct parlance they could only be styled a semi-savage race. The breed had been crossed, and, as it was said, improved, by the introduction of a foreign variety, one of the results of which was to divest them so much of their roving habits, that their wanderings were now almost exclusively limited to the vicinity of the lodge. The persons of the new species, which was white, and their descendants, who were a piebald race, we received strict injunctions to regard as particularly sacred, and on no account were we to make them marks for our "vile guns."

Their haunts being well known, it was not long before a great shouting announced their approach

to the ground where we had taken up positions. The first object visible through the trees was the figure of one of our attendants, brandishing, as he spurred his horse, a long goad: every instant I expected to see it hurled at the terrified porkers, who preceded him by some twenty or thirty yards, and were audibly expressing their discontent at this unusual treatment. On they came, grunting and squeaking in chorus, direct for a shallow pond, on one side of which stood guard a fellow-sportsman, while I was posted on the other: if they continued to pursue the same direction, they had of necessity to cross the sheet of water that lay between us. Including young and old, there might be about a dozen animals, racing together as close as a pack of well-trained hounds, and, as I have already mentioned, giving tongue after their own fashion. As they were thus crowded together, one might have brought down two or three by simply firing into the midst; but this could not have been done without bringing down some of the sacred pigs, which were so intermingled with the others that the whole mass resembled a chess-board, black alternating with white. With the certain prospect, therefore, of slaying one of these should I miss, I

aimed at a black pig in the very centre of the squad, which having reached the brink of the water, halted for an instant, being manifestly loth to plunge into the pure element. Upon firing, the grunting and squeaking waxed longer and louder, and with one accord the animals scrambled into the water, and, sometimes swimming and at others wading, gained the other shore : their good humour was by no means increased by the compulsory purification they underwent, for, notwithstanding their haste, they turned and snapped at each other, and continued to do so as long as they were within sight. In the next moment up came our attendants, headed by the old dog of which I have made mention : the ardour of the chase had imparted to him all the activity of youth, and dashing through the water gallantly, he and the horsemen were in a twinkling lost to our eyes among the woods beyond.

We were engaged in discussing the events of the day before the door of the lodge, when it was announced that Manuel was coming towards us, bearing a cochino ^{on} his shoulders. He soon appeared with the animal, round which the whole party gathered with no little curiosity, to view the sole trophy of the day's marchings and counter-

marchings: but, alas! small cause was there for rejoicing; the cochino was not of the right sort,—it was white, or, rather, piebald,—and, after a due investigation, mine was pronounced to be the fell hand that slew it. I remember, however, making a vain attempt to transfer the merit of its fall to my fellow-sportsman who had likewise fired, by showing that the leg of the animal was broken on the side nearest him; but he was strangely unambitious of the honour, and proved that the ball had entered on the inside of the leg, and consequently could only have proceeded from my gun. I consoled myself, however, for the mistake, by reflecting that it is no easy matter to hit an object seventy yards distant, with a ball from a smooth barrel; and, moreover, there was the satisfaction of knowing that some were gainers by the shot. The cochino was handed over to Manuel, to whom it was an acceptable prize, and no unwelcome addition to the family puchero.

Next morning C—— and I were on our way to the most distant quarter of the Coto. Although less likely to meet with deer in that direction, we were certain to have all the sport to ourselves, and to enjoy it unfettered by the restrictions of yesterday, which in truth we found rather irksome in their

nature. For the first league we toiled through sands heaped by the winds into mounds and hillocks; their sloping sides were smooth as if caused by the hand of art, and upon the tell-tale surfaces we could trace the foot-prints of all the animals with which the preserve abounds. Here was the heavy plunge of the deer into the yielding particles; in close contact was to be seen the stealthy foot-fall of the wild cat scarcely imprinted on the sands; and beside it the larger and deeper impression of the gato montes, a species of tiger-cat found in this region.

Besides these, the surface was marked in many places with the angular impressions caused by the feet of land-birds and wild fowl. Upon this spectacle the geologist would look with an eye of interest. It would recall to his mind those foot-marks of an antediluvian creation which are daily brought to light in the sandstone formations, and would clearly point out to him how such were formed. Here, it was only necessary for an infiltration of water to take place, and the sand, along with its many impressions, would be converted into stone; the traces of the deer and the feline race would then remain stereotyped for the benefit of

future ages, just as those of tortoises and various extinct species have been for ours.

The white tower, our journey's termination, was visible for hours before we reached it: we saw it from a great distance, standing alone in the midst of a dreary flat country clothed with a dense brushwood. Its title, however, was imposing—El Palacio; and in reality there was some less questionable foundation than taste or fancy for this regal appellation, for it had once given shelter to a crowned head. The time was, when this treeless waste was the site of a noble forest of cork-trees, now laid low by the axe of the charcoal-burner; and hither, when the greenwood was in its prime, came Philip the Fourth to chase the deer, which were then as numerous as now they are rare, since a leafy shade no longer conceals their haunts. The monarch with his retinue was entertained by his noble host, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, with all the stately magnificence of a Spanish grandee, and for the time all the luxurious enjoyments of a metropolis were assembled round this remote spot. The house we found more comfortably fitted up in the interior than we had been led to expect; it was however rented by some gentlemen of Xeres,

who came from thence to spend some weeks of the summer season, and on learning this we were not surprised to behold various improvements which raised it above the rank of a mere sporting lodge. The floor of one of the rooms was planked,—a luxury almost unknown in Andalucia; and in conformity with our notions of comfort we selected this for our apartment: the brick floors of the province, however pleasant in summer, have during winter a cheerless aspect, besides being cold and comfortless even when covered with matting, as is frequently done.

In a paddock adjoining the house we were surprised to see half-a-dozen camels at large. These, on inquiring, we found were the property of the enterprising lessee of the pastures in the Coto, and had been introduced *by* him from the Canaries, where they are in common use. On the sandy soil of this district they cannot fail to feel as much at home as among their native deserts, and certainly their presence here will be a boon to the community, as well as being in singular keeping with the nature of the country.

“Señores,” said the keeper of the palacio, from whom we obtained the preceding information,

“Señores, I will tell you a circumstance respecting one of these camels that will make your worships laugh. One night it escaped from the paddock, and strayed across the dehesa till it came near a village a long way from this. And so, about the break of day, there came two countrymen out of the village to proceed to their labours in the fields, and all of a sudden they saw in their path this animal, which, doubtless, is a creature of a very strange appearance to those who have never seen or heard of it. So the men were seized with much fear, and ran to a tree hard by, from behind which they watched its movements.

“‘What can it be, Curro?’ said one.

“‘It’s a whale,’ replied Curro, ‘come on shore to devour us and the village.’

“‘Hombre, no—it’s worse than that : it’s a soul from purgatory !’*

“‘Speak to it, then,’ said Curro, whose teeth were rattling like castanets on hearing this announced.

“‘How can I,’ answered his companion, ‘when I don’t know Latin?’

* Among other superstitions, the vulgar in Spain believe that souls in purgatory assume the shapes of various animals, generally those of an ignoble kind, such as wolves, donkeys, and so forth.

“Nevertheless, señores, he called aloud to it, and said, ‘O soul from purgatory, if you are in pain, or if anything lies heavy on your conscience, tell us, and the priest shall say masses for the peace of your troubled spirit.’ But the poor animal, hearing the voices of men, with whose presence it was familiar, directed its steps towards the spot from whence the sounds proceeded ; whereupon the two were filled with greater fear than before.

“‘Stop!’ roared Curro; ‘stop, and harm not innocent men; I have my escopeta in my hand, and I warn you I will fire if you advance nearer, for we shall defend our lives to the last.’

“However, it still continued to approach, regardless of his threat, so that at length he pointed his escopeta at it and fired, but without doing any injury, though it was very near ; and then the two fled as if for their lives, and when they reached the village raised such an outcry that the whole population seized their arms, believing that the facciosos were upon them. At last, the true cause of the alarm was ascertained, and some of the people sallying forth, caught the animal, and secured it until those in search arrived, by whom it was brought back here.”

The following day we devoted to the pursuit of *caza menor*, or small game, which was in great abundance here; the *caza mayor*, or large game, we reserved for the morrow, intending then to wind up with a search for the deer, which the keepers affirmed were not unfrequently to be met with. Nowhere had I seen rabbits in such numbers as here; the place literally swarmed with them, and one could not peep over a bush without seeing scores at play on the other side. But, in truth, although, from the sandy nature of the soil, this tract was particularly favourable to their habits and increase, Spain, on the whole, is much overrun by rabbits; and it is a fact not unworthy of note, that they appear to have been as abundant in ancient as in modern times. I have seen a Roman medal upon which conquered and suppliant Spain is represented as suing for peace; the figure, clad in feminine attire, holds in one hand an olive branch, and at her feet crouches the genius of the country in the shape of a rabbit. This fact appears also to have been well known, for Catullus alludes to it when he styles the Spaniards

cuniculos

Celtiberiæ fli.

At this kind of shooting we were no matches for the guardas or keepers who accompanied us; at least C——, who considered himself something of a shot, was, in spite of his double-barrelled detonator, fairly distanced by the rude flint single-barrels of our lynx-eyed companions. Their mode of charging their pieces was equally rude, and was a ludicrous contrast to the trim apparatus of modern sportsmen. The proper quantity of powder was poured from an ancient horn into the hollow of the hand, and from thence into the gun; a few leaves torn from the nearest shrub formed the wadding; and the shot was measured out in the same way as the powder. They brought with them a brace of podencos, a species of dog much in vogue among Andalusian sportsmen, though to our eyes they seemed little better than curs, and on experience we found their appearance far from being redeemed by superior qualifications. There was also in the field one of the far-famed race of Spanish pointers, with the division between the nostrils distinguishing this caste; its powers of scent were unquestionably great, but were neutralised by the slowness of the pace by which it travelled over the ground: indeed, its evolutions were so much on a par with those of

a tortoise, as were also those of others of the same breed I saw, that I should be loth to recommend their services to any British sportsman who is not possessed of more than an ordinary stock of patience.

Bearing game-bags heavily laden with red-legged partridges and rabbits, we returned home as evening came on, and found awaiting us an excellent supper prepared by the wife of the senior guarda. At an early hour we retired to rest, in order to be in full vigour on the morrow for the nobler game, for the sake of which we had principally sought this remote spot. As to our prospects of success, I had been led by the experience of the day to regard them as anything but cheering. Traces of deer, it was true, were to be seen in abundance, and many were so fresh as to denote that a few hours only had elapsed since they had been imprinted on the soil; yet I was far from hailing these as favourable omens. For one reason, the country appeared destitute of cover; or, where this occurred, it was of a nature to embarrass rather than facilitate our movements. Here were no pine woods to furnish a shady ambush, but sandy knolls, whose naked summits betrayed to a great distance the presence of objects upon them: on

the other hand, the hollows between were clothed with a growth of brushwood so tall as generally to reach above our heads, and not unfrequently so dense and matted as to defy our utmost efforts to force a way through it. Hence, as it seemed to me, we could not stir without exposing ourselves so completely as to ruin every hope of approaching within gunshot of an animal so timid and wary as the deer. Our guardas, however, were of a different opinion, and even went so far as to maintain that our yesterday's quarters, as regarded the abundance of deer and the probabilities of encountering them, were not to be mentioned in the same breath with the Palacio. Notwithstanding this confident assertion, I remained as sceptical as before: local prejudices in Spain are so strong, that it is very rare to find the inhabitant of a pueblo, or district, who does not ascribe to it every gift of nature and every virtue under the sun; and in proportion as he praises his own "pais," so does he depreciate the towns and provinces of his neighbours.

Next morning we were moving along briskly, following the steps of the aforesaid guardas, who certainly displayed considerable judgment in their plan of operations. At the distance of a mile from

the Palacio, we halted upon the brow of a sandy mound, which, with several others, encompassed a hollow space of several hundred yards in length. I cannot describe this depression better than by styling it an oblong trough carpeted with luxuriant brushwood. Looking down upon it, the whole seemed so dense and compact, as almost to induce the belief that it would be a much less difficult matter to walk along the top than force a passage through a mass so solid. This, however, our guardas proceeded to do: after stationing C—— and myself about a hundred yards apart, upon one of the long sides of the hollow, they commenced from the opposite one to cross towards us.

My position was on the rounded summit of one of these sandy hillocks; but as there rose thereon not even a tuft of grass, far less a bush behind which I might screen myself, I retired down the exterior slope, as the only mode of effecting that purpose. Here, stretching myself on the sand, I listened to the shoutings and whoopings of the beaters, trusting to their lungs for sufficient warning, should any game hold towards my side. I had not lain long in my retreat before the confusion of tongues on a sudden rose louder and more vehe-

ment. Amid the cries, I distinguished the voice of the oldest guarda, shouting to me to take a good aim. Why this advice should be directed to me I could not at first divine, as my ears informed me that all on my side was quiet; and my powers of vision I was loth to exercise from the naked summit of the hillock, lest I should become the observed of all-observing deer. I was beginning, therefore, to conclude that the shout of the guarda was addressed to my friend, when I heard in front of me the sound of twigs snapping and branches being brushed aside. In a moment I stood on the top of the mound, just in time to behold before me a fine stag clearing a bush in beautiful style. A few more bounds would have brought him up to where I stood. The instant I appeared, he paused, his head and neck alone rising above the brushwood. As he was then not more than thirty yards off, I hurriedly discharged the right barrel, which, for want of better ammunition, I had loaded with a few pistol-bullets. These, I believe, had no other effect than to rouse him from his fit of surprise at my unexpected appearance; then, wheeling sharply round to his left, he had gained about thirty yards more ere I sent a bullet from the remaining barrel

upon his steps. Still he continued in full flight, his progress being a succession of bounds, characterised by such ease, freedom, and grace, that I could not help watching his retreat with an admiration that banished every shade of disappointment I might feel at my unlucky shooting. At the further end of the hollow he dashed into a sheet of water that bounded it, and then, mounting a slight eminence beyond, disappeared down the reverse slope. Slowly I sought my ambush, from which I was again summoned by the significant cry, "Apunt'usted bien" (Aim well). Another stag was roused, but on this occasion kept so far in the centre of the hollow as to be beyond the range of those who were posted at the sides, and only offered to one of the guardas the chance of a long shot. He, too, followed the direction taken by the first; and no more appearing, we proceeded upon their tracks.

"Señor," said the old guarda when I overtook him, "you have hit that animal; I heard the ball strike it."

This assertion, however gratifying, was at the same time so extraordinary, that I could scarcely yield it credence. At that time I was unaware that the "smack" of the ball, as it is termed, upon the

hide of a deer is quite perceptible to the ears of the practised, and can be readily distinguished from the report of the gun by which it is accompanied. Without, however, disputing his opinion, I followed him over the eminence I have mentioned, at the foot of which another shallow lagoon was spread out. To the further side of this we hastened, while C—— and the younger guarda kept upon the deer's track, which, as it lay among the brushwood, and was with difficulty to be detected, led them more slowly down the slope. Our object in seeking the opposite margin of the lagoon, was to ascertain if the first deer had crossed it; and for this purpose we coasted along the side of the water, the old man narrowly examining every print of a hoof as we proceeded. He turned at length—his eyes sparkling with excitement—and said, “Don Roberto, he has not passed this way; we shall find him there,” pointing to the slope, along the face of which C—— and the others were scattered in close search. Sure enough, a shout from one of the party confirmed his prediction, and brought us in haste to the spot where he stood. We found the stag at the foot of a large bush, quietly doubled up, to use an expressive phrase, and life apparently extinct for

some time: not a trace of blood stained its coat, except a solitary speck that marked where the ball had entered. Though young, it was a large animal, and formed a goodly load for the macho, which was despatched to the Palacio with its freight. In the meantime we proceeded in quest of the second stag, which the younger guarda maintained he had wounded.

To us, as we followed the men, it was a matter of astonishment to hear them, on passing various hoof-prints, name the precise time that had elapsed since each impression was stamped on the soil; and this with as much confidence as if they had been witnesses of the fact. To our eyes there appeared no perceptible difference between the track that was ten and that which was two hours old; yet, with the skill acquired by long experience, the guardas perceived some distinction by which they were guided in the pursuit. Besides this, the track was frequently lost, as we supposed, at spots where twenty deer or more had crossed and recrossed in such a way as to cover the ground with a perplexed maze of foot-prints. Nevertheless our guardas, staunch as the sleuth hounds of old, held unerringly for their quarry, and after proceeding a couple of miles, dis-

covered by signs known to themselves that we were drawing nigh the place where the stag we tracked had found a covert. We now advanced with caution towards the locality they indicated, but had the mortification to see all our endeavours come to nought: the startled animal, long before we came within shot, broke from its cover, and bounded away at such a pace as to leave us no alternative but to give up the pursuit. The day was now so far advanced that a fresh expedition could not be undertaken with hopes of a successful issue, and we therefore unwillingly directed our steps to the Palacio, our reluctance being increased by the recollection that this was the last day of our sport, for the leave we enjoyed was limited.

Such is the style of deer-shooting in the Coto: although it differs materially from the science of stalking as practised in the Highlands of Scotland, and wants the high zest which must ever attend that exciting pursuit, it is not devoid of attractions peculiar to itself. It must be remembered that the nature of the country is adverse to stalking, which is impracticable on a flat or undulating surface clothed with woods; in place, therefore, of the lonely chase of the Highland sportsman, who

tracks his game in the same noiseless fashion by which the Red Indian steals upon his foe, there is necessarily adopted here the system of driving the deer, the characteristics of which are numbers and noise. Even this mode has its exciting qualities, and I am persuaded that many would prefer it to the other, from being the more stirring of the two. There is something indescribably animating in the tumult and cries that then wake up the woods; at every shout that rings through their depths, the sportsman grasps his gun closer, and more intently eyes the woody mass in his front; his ear becomes preternaturally strained, so that the falling of a leaf disturbs it; now a distant shot excites his hopes—now another close by breaks the profound stillness around him; and then comes the headlong rush of the deer past him—his rapid aim, his moment of expectation, and its fruits of chagrin or triumph. In all this there is a charm, which though of a different kind from the prolonged excitement of a Highland chase, wherein every energy is tested, and hope and fear more keenly aroused, is all-absorbing at the time, and never fails to leave the liveliest impression on the mind.

The following day our macho, after a march of

fifteen miles, might be seen stumbling along the ill-paved streets of San Lucar under the weight of its antlered burden. The extent of the Coto may be gathered from the circumstance that our march traversed only the half of the limits it embraces; in round numbers its dimensions are thirty miles long by twelve at the broadest point; on three sides it is enveloped by water, the Guadalquivir rolling past two, while the Atlantic lines the third with foam.

There was one consequence connected with the successful result of our sport, which was not only unexpected, but formed a most agreeable termination to our adventures. As a matter of course, our friends in San Lucar received a goodly share of the venison; in sending which, we considered we were merely acknowledging no inconsiderable amount of kindness, for which we were then as ever their debtors. The sequel, however, showed that Spanish pride does not rest easy till it has returned an equivalent, or more than an equivalent, for presents of this nature: from that time we never ceased to receive supplies of wine from our friends. As they were all wine-growers, such gifts were perfectly legitimate, but as often as

they reached us did the senders lament that better wine they had not to offer. The *manzanilla*, however, was undeniably excellent; and as C—— and I pledged each other in fragrant bumpers, we both agreed that for once I had made a “lucky hit.”

CHAPTER IV.

WINTER IN SAN LUCAR—SANGRE AZUL—TERTULIA—GLOOMY
AIR OF SPANISH DWELLINGS—PELAR LA PAVA—INTERMENT
OF A COUNTRYMAN—VISITING—XERES—ITS EXTENSIVE WINE
ESTABLISHMENTS—THE UPSET.

GENERALLY speaking, the winter descends upon Spain with no common severity. Upon the sunny province of Andalucia alone does its touch fall lightly, but even here there is weather which would be considered inclement; from time to time deluges of rain occur which shut out the sun for days, and so long as they last confine the inhabitants to their homes: these watery skies are, however, no unwelcome substitutes for the piercing winds of the Castilian steppes or the snows of Aragon and Galicia. Although the season was pretty far advanced, it became, therefore, necessary to choose some town where, while waiting the return of spring, I might pass an interval of inaction in the least irksome

manner possible. Cadiz I rejected, much to the astonishment of its alameda-pacing, café-lounging inhabitants, who hold these enjoyments to be the summit of happiness; but life in that city to my feelings so closely resembled the monotonous existence of the captive in his cell, that, after a few days' trial, I never failed to find it unsupportably tedious. On every side but one the sea washes up to its walls; and where it does not, the gate opens upon a long causeway traversing a flat, partly of sand and partly of salt-water marshes. This constitutes the sole promenade beyond the walls, and the reader may easily imagine I had no desire to share its delights with the Gaditanians. Seville then occurred to me, and from experience I could tell that of all cities in the south of Spain, it possessed the greatest attractions for a stranger. There are paintings for the connoisseur; many a relic of Moorish and Roman art for the antiquary; theatres and an opera for those who love such. Without the walls are those charming walks by the broad Guadalquivir, which, at every sunset, beholds the bright-eyed Sevillanas moving along its banks slow and stately, but not so silent as its own tide. Within the walls is to be found the best society in Andalusia, whatever Cadiz may urge to the con-

trary; for here are the residences of the principal nobility of the province. Besides this, by means of the steamers on the river, the stranger is brought into that close communication with the world at home which makes him feel that, although in a strange land, he is not removed from friends.

Sundry considerations, however, induced me to prolong my stay in San Lucar, which thus became my head-quarters for some months. During that period I enjoyed abundant opportunities of meeting and becoming acquainted with the principal families of the town, with many of whom my acquaintance ripened into intimacy. The society of San Lucar, from the difference of its materials, was of a far higher order than that which is generally found in English provincial towns of the same extent and population. Here were the abodes of those hidalgos and country gentlemen whose estates lay in the vicinity, and who, in place of residing upon their properties, transferred their mansions to this the nearest town of note. Such is the custom among the landed proprietors in the province; and its prevalence is to be traced, partly to the general insecurity of life and property in a country so indifferently governed as Spain, and partly to the

natural disposition of the people to congregate into communities. The same motives influence those classes whose callings connect them with agriculture and a rural life ; and one and all, the lowest husbandman not excepted, resort to towns or villages for protection and society. Upon the latter class, such a necessity—for a necessity it is—may be supposed to press with peculiar severity, as they frequently travel four or eight miles before reaching the soil they have to till ; but the Andalusian jornalero finds a remedy for this hardship. While his master sallies forth, mounted on a prancing steed, he bestrides a “burrico,” and proceeds in the dawn of the morning to the scene of his labours ; from whence, at the close of the day, he returns upon the back of that despised animal. To him it is, therefore, as valuable as the pig is to the Irish cottager, and as often becomes an inmate of his cabin and the pet of the “niños.”

At the house of Don J—— P——, a tertulia was held every evening, at which the greater part of the *sangre azul* in San Lucar never failed to assemble. They of the *sangre azul*, or “blue blood,” are the aristocracy of the place, and by virtue of the ancient tide that flows in their veins, assume a tone and

superiority that is, of course, highly distasteful to those whose blood is not so blue as that of the "Cristianos viejos y rancios." Accordingly, society is divided into a higher and lower circle, the "alta categoria" and the "baxa categoria;" the former are the exclusives of the place, few in numbers, but of noble descent, and, though displaying less hauteur than most men in their position, the cause of dire heartburnings and jealousies among the "baxa categoria," which embraces every shade of the vulgar rich. The two circles seldom come into contact, except at entertainments given by the former: such festive meetings, however, are rare, and, even were they more frequent, would have little effects in narrowing the distance by which the divisions are separated; the tertulia still exists to interpose an effectual barrier against intimacy.

Few, I imagine, need be informed that a tertulia is a conversazione of a kind peculiar to Spain: in the metropolis and the larger towns it embraces a numerous assemblage of acquaintances as well as friends; but in the smaller provincial towns it is open only to the latter and the members and relatives of the family at whose house it takes place. It is not every family that holds a tertulia; in San

Lucar there were only two who received their friends in this manner; neither is it given every evening, although this is frequently done, but generally on stated nights of the week—sometimes only once in that period of time. On these occasions it is expected that he who has the entrée should present himself, if only for a few minutes. To absent himself without cause would give umbrage to the family, as it would imply that their society had lost its attractions; but by a visit, however short, he is understood to express his sense of its agreeability, and at the same time need plead no excuse for its brevity, that being always ascribed to other engagements for the evening.

These remarks being premised, let me ask the reader to picture to himself a spacious saloon, whose lofty roof of dark wood is dimly seen by the light of a couple of lamps. The walls are simply white-washed—this being done for the sake of coolness in summer, and display neither ornament nor painting, except one at the upper end of the room—a crucifixion by Zurbaran, that master of dark colouring crossed by broad gleams of light. For reasons which will be appreciated in a warm climate, the furniture is of the simplest description, and, judged

by our standards of comfort, scanty and incomplete: a cabinet, an antique table or two, with a host of modern chairs, of the lightest materials, standing up against the walls, scarcely, if at all, encroach upon the dimensions of the apartment, the aspect of which, at a first glance, is somewhat cold and cheerless. The floor, of brick, at this season is hidden by matting, and in the centre is placed a brasier of glowing charcoal; round this runs a ledge of wood, upon which, after having drawn in our chairs, we place our feet, and literally sit round the fire. As each tertuliano enters he bows to the lady of the house, addressing her and her female friends with the salutation of "A los pies de usted," (At your feet). The shaking of hands is unknown in Spain, and even among friends is never seen, except on extraordinary occasions, such as the meeting after a long separation, or on the departure for a distant journey. On quitting the room the visitor says with a loud voice, "Señores y señoras, que lo pasen bien," (Gentlemen and ladies, farewell); or perhaps, "may you remain with God;" to which they respond, "Vaya usted con Dios," (May you go with God).

While thus seated, conversation seldom flags, for

the colloquial powers of Andalusians are very great; and as raconteurs, there are few who can approach them: should, however, their vivacity be exhausted, the resources of music and cards are at hand to beguile the hours. Let it not, however, be supposed that the guitar then comes into play; that national instrument is voted vulgar by the higher ranks, and but seldom, and then only in the hands of a gentleman, are its strains awakened in the salas; by a lady it is never touched. Occasionally it happens, that while thus whiling away the time, a bell is heard tinkling in the street, and from the increasing loudness of the sound appears to be approaching nearer. One of the party moves to the window, from whence he descries the flashing light below, and intimates the fact to the listening circle. "Su magestad, su magestad!" they exclaim, and one and all sink upon their knees. It is the Host, borne to some dying sinner to comfort his last moments, and smooth his passage to eternity. So long as the bell is heard, the whole party remain in this posture of reverence, while not a sound is audible in the room, except a murmur from the lips of those who are muttering a prayer for the weal of the dying; but when the last tinkle

ceases, they rise to their feet, and resume the occupations at which they had been engaged. The speaker finishes the sentence in the midst of which he was interrupted—the song is taken up at the verse at which it stopped—the cards are dealt round without a moment's loss of time ; no one bestows a thought upon the fate of his dying fellow-creature, or regards the ceremony through which he has passed in a more serious light than an observance imposed by custom, and which it would be singular to omit. On highdays and holidays, the amusements are of a more mirthful character than usual, and resemble the festivities of merry Christmas ;—forfeits, round games, and a variety of other diversions are introduced, in which the old join the young, and the party seldom separates till a late hour. On other occasions, at ten o'clock a general move takes place ; cloaks and shawls are in requisition, and the company depart homewards to partake of supper, which is generally placed on the table at that hour. As the dinner usually takes place at an early hour of the day, the evening meal becomes an important one in Spanish life, and few linger long in the sala

after the clock has announced that its hour has arrived.

In San Lucar, as in the other towns of the province, there are no areas interposing between the house and the narrow border of pavement which is supplied for the convenience of the foot passenger; the latter consequently commands a full view through the windows on his level into the interior of the apartments on the ground floor. These, however, in mansions of pretension, are generally converted into stables, and as a matter of necessary precaution, the windows are strongly grated. Not only is this the case with regard to the lower story, but the upper rooms are similarly defended; and on penetrating into the inner court or patio, with which each house is provided, the stranger marks with surprise that even here every casement is fenced with bars and gratings. Notwithstanding, therefore, the dazzling colours and gaudy embellishments which frequently ornament the exterior walls, there appears to hang a gloomy air of distrust around every mansion; its aspect realises to the letter the Spanish proverb that is applied to those who, for protection's sake, encumber themselves with many arms—Car-

gado de hierro, cargado de miedo (loaded with iron, loaded with fear); and, undoubtedly, fear is or was the origin of its fortress-like appearance. That these apprehensions are on the whole groundless, will, I think, be acknowledged by every traveller who has resided for any length of time in Andalusian cities; nevertheless, the citizen continues to cling to the habits of his fathers, and cannot bring himself to adopt fashions more in unison with altered times; he still preserves these and many other remains of ancient jealousy and distrust. Thus, for instance, in seeking admittance into his dwelling, there are certain formalities to be observed, that recall the days when watchwords were given, and drawbridge and portcullis lowered. The peasant, as he stands at the gate, cries aloud, "Ave Maria purissima;" to this the response from within is, "Sin peccado concebida," (conceived without sin), or in some parts of the province, "Bendita y alabada sea para siempre," (for ever blessed and praised). More frequently the latter religious rejoinder is neglected, and the speaker from within simply inquires, "Quien es?" (who is it?) To this the invariable reply is, "Gente de paz," (people of peace.) Having by this scrutiny proved himself to

be not only a good Catholic, but a man of pacific intentions, he is allowed to enter; the door turns upon its hinges, and he walks forward into the court.

But to return to the grated windows of these dwellings. Should you have occasion after night-fall to traverse the dimly lighted streets, you will not go far without brushing past a figure muffled in an ample cloak, and with the sombrero slouched over the eyes, leaning against the iron bars. As you pass, your ears inform you that it is conversing in a low voice with some one within, whom the darkness shrouds from observation. In all probability you will take no further note of the whispering pair; but if you be more curious than wise, and bestow on them more than a passing look, another becloaked figure will probably step out from some corner, and politely request you to refrain from interfering with other people's business. If this hint be not sufficient, he will prepare to enforce it by other means, and, by displaying his navaja, threaten to appeal to arms. He is engaged in one of the most sacred duties of Spanish friendship. To guard from danger or discovery—or, as it is termed, “guardar les espaldas,” “to guard the back” of a friend who may be playing the lover—is an office to be under-

taken only by a tried comrade, whose devotion and courage may be proof against the rude trials to which such a position subjects him. If the fair one be noted for her attractions, then there are rivals to be encountered, whose jealous passions, if aroused by witnessing another thus engaged, nothing would so soon appease as a thrust of the knife, given, as may be supposed, without much regard to the rules of fair play. Under these circumstances, the second is summoned by his principal to stand like the knight of old, ready to do battle against all comers, should they approach with hostile intentions. I need not add, that these nocturnal meetings are a frequent occasion of brawls, and that lives are sometimes lost, and usually dangerous wounds given and received, when the knife is brought into play.

This custom, though more prevalent among the lower classes, is not entirely banished from the upper ranks of society. In truth, the mystery and romance attending it have too many charms for Spanish lovers of every degree ever to permit it to become the exclusive usage of any one rank in life. It is far more congenial to his temperament to throw

a veil of secrecy over his attachment, which not unfrequently from the first wears a certain air of romance. On the Alameda he encounters some dark-eyed beauty, whose glance fires all the susceptible nature of his Southern bosom. To follow her footsteps when the gay throng disperses—to linger in the narrow street where her home is—and, by one of those mute but expressive signs known in southern climes, to testify his passion to her as she sits at the balcony that commands a full view of the moving world in the street—or to convey a message by some Mercury familiar with such errands—are the usual steps that precede an interview. This, however, let it not be imagined is to be sought amid the shady alleys of the Alameda. No; the fair ones of Spain are too jealously guarded by mammas and duennas ever to know much of the pleasures of solitude, far less to enjoy them with a companion. But when gates are barred, and the household wrapped in sleep, it is then that the Spanish maid rises to keep her tryst with her lover. As she steals along the corridors, and descends to the basement story, before a grated window in which he keeps his impatient watch, perhaps she smiles at

the fruitlessness of parental precautions, and repeats to herself

Madre, mi madre
Guardas me poneis,
Pero si no me guardé
No me guardareis.

Of course, it is rare to find meetings of this nature sanctioned by parents, though there are occasionally exceptions. I was acquainted with a family, proud of its ancient Castilian blood, one of the ladies of which had become attached to a gentleman, whose pedigree and profession made him no match in the eyes of her parents for the daughter of a hidalgo and old Christian to boot. As usual, the young folks met in the manner I have described. Time wore on, and whether it was that the merit and character of the lover, or his rising fortunes and reputation, atoned for the fault of being unprovided with sixteen quarterings, I know not, but the hearts of the old people began at length to soften towards him. The first signs of their relenting were shown in a singular way. As he stood at the window before which he was in the habit of posting himself, one of the domestics appeared with a chair, and, with his master's compliments, requested him to be seated thereon. From that day, or rather night,

as regularly as he presented himself at the same place, a servant advanced with a chair, which was tendered to him with the usual compliments from the hidalgo. This continued for some months, till at last it was formally notified that he was at liberty to transfer his courtship from the exterior to the interior of the mansion; this was tantamount to his being accepted as the "novio" or betrothed of the young lady. Henceforward the course of true love could not fail to run smooth, as the sala was open to it, and the novio was welcome there; but notwithstanding this, the stolen interviews of yore had attractions for the couple which they preferred to the meetings in the drawing-room. Frequently, on having occasion at night to pass by the house, did I see a figure I well knew, though wrapped in a cloak and embozado, standing by a certain window, and holding converse there with the novia.

One morning an English friend called upon me to communicate tidings of a painful nature. He informed me that a fellow-countryman had arrived the day before from Cadiz, and, being in the last stage of consumption, had been denied admittance into the various lodging-houses in the town. In consequence, the only shelter he could obtain was in

the public hospital. At an early hour of the morning, death had overtaken the sufferer in his wretched asylum.

As the conduct of those who thus shut their doors against a dying man may appear unwarrantably cruel, and may lead some of my readers to tax the Andalusians with inhumanity, it is but fair to say, that with regard to this malady they entertain certain deep-rooted prejudices. I never met an Andalusian who did not maintain that consumption was highly infectious, and that he would remain no longer than he could help in a dwelling where a case had terminated fatally. They imagine that the walls imbibe the infection so largely that ordinary modes of purification fail to eradicate it; and to such an extreme is this prejudice carried, that tenants and proprietors are in the custom of demanding from the consumptive inmates of their dwellings a sum sufficient to defray the expense of plastering anew the apartments they occupied; this is considered the only mode of effectually banishing the remains of the malady, and of rendering the rooms habitable for the future.

'It was necessary to make arrangements for rendering the last offices to one of our country and

creed, and for this purpose, in company with my friend and the consul, I proceeded to the hospital. What had been once a convent was now converted into that establishment, and in one of the narrow cells lay the corpse of the deceased. Our motives for this act had been simply those of duty towards the departed, unknown to us except as a fellow-countryman; but when an attendant lifted up a rug that covered his remains, it struck me that, living or dead, the possessor of that wasted frame could be regarded with no indifferent eye. Tall he must have been, for the stiffened limbs projected beyond the foot of the bed—unnaturally outstretched as it seemed by the hand of death; the features of his countenance were regular and even delicate, and were united to a lofty forehead from which dissolution could not efface its thoughtful expression. Poor fellow! he died, as the attendants told us, speaking in his own tongue, and endeavouring in vain to communicate with them in a language they did not understand. Probably his mind was wandering, as frequently happens to the victims of this malady in its closing stage; but if it were not, how painful is it to think that his dying moments were embittered by the hopelessness of conveying

to distant friends the last wishes and last words[•] of affection!

“ Oh! schwer ist's in der fremde sterben unbeweint.” So says Schiller; and those who have sojourned alone among strangers, and been laid on a bed of sickness from which they expected never to rise, know this feeling full well; however kindly they may be tended, there is yet a sense of isolation which falls with dreary effect upon the thoughts; and to aggravate all, how much is there one would wish to say, but is prevented from expressing by the certainty that word or message will never reach those to whom it is addressed! Happy they who die in their own land, with kindred and friends around them, and familiar hands to smooth their pillow.

It is a scandal to Spain, and a reproach to Britain, that the bones of our countrymen are denied a nook in the public cemeteries here; nay, more, the privilege of a separate place of interment is conceded only as a special favour, and then only after many representations and protracted diplomacy. Two or three of the large towns are, however, provided with resting-places for Protestant clay: Malaga was the first to obtain this boon; and I believe Cadiz is now

added to the number. Where, then, do our countrymen rest who die at a distance from these places? They are buried like dogs: either in ditches, gardens, fields, or in the sands by the seashore. The clay of a heretic is that of an outcast; any place is, therefore, good enough for it; and, above all, let it be removed to a distance from Catholic dust, which would shrink with holy horror from the contamination of its approach. Such are the language and the sentiments of bigotry; and suiting its notions to the rancorous spirit they breathe, it deals in the manner I have described with the corpses of our Protestant countrymen.

Our reflections upon this point took a practical turn as we deliberated concerning the interment of the deceased. To bury him in the sands by the river side revolted our feelings, even if we had not known that his relatives were on the way to join him, and would naturally wish to visit the spot where he was laid, and perhaps mark it by some memorial of attachment. After much consultation, we could devise no better plan than to obtain admission into the cemetery, using for that purpose the engine which in this country removes mountains of scruples and banishes every difficulty: a golden key

we thought would open the gates; and Mr. C——, as the most experienced among us in these matters, undertook to conduct the negociation. So sure was he of a successful result, that, deeming further communication unnecessary, we engaged to meet the following morning before daybreak at the cemetery. Punctually at the hour appointed we were in waiting for him; the night had been stormy, and from time to time fierce blasts of wind and rain drove us to take shelter behind the walls of the enclosure. In a short time Mr. C—— joined us, attended by Salmon, one of the escort employed to protect travellers on the road between San Lucar and Port St. Mary's; he was, moreover, high in the confidence of Mr. C——, who frequently entrusted him with commissions of importance. His offices had on this occasion been put in requisition to induce the sexton by the promise of a bribe to leave the gate unlocked, for the opening of this was our chief difficulty, and could only be effected by his means. It appeared, however, that either gold had lost its usual charms for the latter, or his scruples had returned during the night with overpowering force; on trying the bolts, not one was found absent from its duty. Salmon, however, consoled us with the assurance that the

man was certain to keep his word, and would probably come in person with the keys.—Meanwhile, as a cemetery, like many other things in this strange country, differs very much from those of our own or other lands, it will not be amiss to describe it here. Seen from the outside, its shape is usually that of a square enclosed by lofty walls, but in the quadrangular space within you behold no mounds, no gravestones to mark the lonely dwellings of the dead. These are ranged above-ground, along the inner side of the enclosing wall; each coffin being placed in a narrow cell, tiers of which rise above each other to the height of twelve or fifteen feet. In truth, when you look at the volumes on the shelves of a library, supposing them to be laid horizontally instead of being upright, you have some notion of the mode of interment in a Spanish place of burial; each tenement for mortality occupies the place of a volume, and, like it, displays its name and titles on a conspicuous place.

We waited in silent expectation till the sun rose unpleasantly high for our purpose, for which the presence of many observers was far from desirable; people at the same time began to be moving about; and lastly, to complete our mortification, a priest

approached the gate. Our presence there attracted his notice, and after regarding us with an eye of wonder and suspicion, he admitted himself by a private key, and proceeded to his daily routine of performing early mass in a small chapel within the precincts. To have remained longer after this would have been a waste of time, and so we retraced our steps homewards; Salmon, as we went, relieving his feelings by the application to the faithless conspirator of such choice epithets as "picaro," "tunante," and so forth. Before we parted, another consultation was held, at which it was decided that, having failed in this attempt, and there being little likelihood of our succeeding in a fresh one, permission should be solicited to bury our departed countryman in the garden of the hospital. The leave we sought was granted, and in the afternoon we met beside a shallow grave that had been hastily dug in a corner. The coffin was brought forth—a simple box of deal, provided with lock and key. One of the attendants lifted up the lid, to show that no deception was practised; and the beautiful service for the Burial of the Dead being read by Mr. C——, earth was returned to earth, and our task was done.

Of my winter's sojourn in San Lucar I have

little to record, except that life there is very like what it usually is in country towns; generally speaking, monotony was a chief feature. Every day when the weather was fine—which was not always the case, for deluges of rain pour down for two or three days at a time—I took my accustomed walk on the *playa* or beach of sand along the Guadalquivir, to inhale the fresh and health-giving breezes from the Atlantic; or, perhaps, strolled into the country among the surrounding vineyards. At this season of the year the generous clusters are no longer seen embowered amid luxuriant foliage, but a few gnarled twigs and stumps are all that remain of the vine; and fields of such bear no very distant resemblance to plantations of ill-conditioned gooseberry-bushes. Occasionally a morning visit to some family whiled away an hour; but the forenoon is not the time to see a Spanish dame to advantage. Her toilette appears to be deferred to the hour of the evening *paseo*; nay, it has struck me,—but this I speak with “bated breath,”—that ablutions are postponed till long past midday; at all events, when sitting with an old shawl wrapped round her, and otherwise carelessly attired, she is not the same creature who on the Alameda, her

symmetrical shape set off to advantage by the costume of her country, walks and moves the personification of unstudied grace and natural vivacity. In this land, so far behind the age, dinner takes place at the unfashionable hour of two: it is followed by an hour or so devoted to the siesta; that over, the sleepers arise, and the male portion of them shake off their lethargy at the café over coffee and political argumentation; then comes the Alameda, where, from the time that the cavaliers join the señoritas, nothing is heard but the hum of voices mingled with the rattling of fans and the sound of moving feet. This animated scene has also its allotted span; in due course tyrant Custom steps in among the throng and bids it disperse; politics and flirtations are then adjourned to the following evening; and in the mean time, those to whom a tertulia is open, repair thither. Here the flow of small talk begins afresh, and never ceases to pour from the lips of the assembly till the hour of departure arrives. Each one then wends his way homewards to supper; and thus an afternoon passes in San Lucar much in the same way as it is spent throughout the other towns of the province.

Once or twice during my residence I was required

by the laws of Spanish etiquette to pay visits of a more ceremonious nature than usual. It is the custom for the friends of a gentleman to pay their respects to him with some show of formality upon the day of his patron saint. It is hardly necessary to say that his patron is the saint whose name he bears; and supposing him therefore to be called José, the visits are made upon the day devoted by the Romish Church to the especial honour of that saint. His house is then thrown open as if for a levée. On reaching the sala, his wife and family, arrayed in their best, are found sitting in state to receive the company; the master will probably be absent, being engaged in the same office towards others of his name which his visitors are performing towards himself. After a short visit, each one retires, but not before expressing his best wishes for the welfare of the house. Those whose rank does not entitle them to the entrée of the sala, are not however debarred from testifying their regard, but it is done in a different fashion; upon a table in the hall there is placed a book in which they inscribe their names, which is deemed all-sufficient for the purpose. This usage is one of ancient date in Spain, and was probably prevalent, if it is not so now, throughout the rest of

Catholic Europe. It is mentioned by Lady Mary Wortley Montague as having been one of the customs of society in Vienna during her residence there; and her description closely corresponds with that which I have given.

Being tempted by some fine weather, I was induced to break through the routine of existence in San Lucar by making an excursion to Xeres. The direct road being then impassable, I was compelled to make a detour and take the route by Port St. Mary's. As far as that town, nothing could be better than the condition of the road, along which gangs of convicts were stationed at various distances to keep it in repair; but upon quitting the port, a widely different scene presented itself. The road, which had manifestly been formed with great labour, was now in a state of total disrepair, and on looking forward displayed only a succession of muddy pools of water: round these our calesa coasted, varying this style of progress by diverging occasionally into the fields on either side, or boldly traversing some of the Stygian ponds, the water in which usually reached to the axles of our vehicle. So slow and tedious, therefore, was our advance, that two hours were consumed ere we discerned the

white buildings of Xeres, which is little more than two leagues from Port St. Mary's.

Of this far-famed fount of generous wine it is out of my province to speak; lying in the beaten track of tourists, it is too well known to require a lengthened description from my pen. It is a city of fifty or sixty thousand inhabitants, situated upon an eminence, and would claim no more than a passing glance from the traveller, were it not for the universal renown it has acquired in connexion with the juice of the grape. Notwithstanding the elevated position of Xeres, and the wealth of its inhabitants, there is no town in Andalusia so ill-paved, filthy, and altogether so offensive to the nostrils. The reception we experienced on entering it would have daunted any but a traveller inured to Spanish towns; for the termination to the execrable road I have just described was a wide space covered with dead horses and donkeys, upon the carcasses of which hordes of savage dogs were preying. Amid these our calesa wound its way and conveyed us to the inn, which is situated in a large square; here, too, everything as regards cleanliness was in keeping with the character of the town, and a more repulsive place I never entered.

One thing, however, must be affirmed of Xeres, and that is, that its great wine proprietors are living examples of the truth of the remark, that wine opens the heart of man. Their hospitality is on a scale proportioned to the vastness of their establishments, which are truly princely; nothing, indeed, but the largest amount of capital could construct and fill those magazines of wine, wherein are deposited the accumulated vintages of years. By far the most extensive are those of Mr. Peter Domecq, which are said to cover a space of three acres of ground. In wonder I followed the proprietor as he conducted me from one storehouse to another, each edifice as large as a church: there was not one that did not seem to suffer from a plethora of huge casks, in any one of which might be absorbed the vintage of a dozen vineyards. The giants were piled one above another in long ranks, divided by narrow passages, that resembled the deep lanes of the country. The uppermost tier, of which there were usually three, contained the produce of the latest vintages; in the intermediate was an older wine; and in the foundation story the most ancient of all. Whatever quantity was drawn off from this latter tier, was replaced by an equal

portion from the casks above, so that no precise age could be assigned to any one cask, the contents of which were in fact a mixture of various ages and growths. Hence it is impossible for the wine proprietors here to comply to the letter with an order specifying an article of a certain age. If, for instance, a ten-year-old butt be required, it will be prepared according to a certain formula, into which there enters something of an algebraical calculation; there will be a small portion of wine a hundred years old, something more of an article perhaps twenty, and the remainder will consist of a vintage only four or five years in the storehouse: thus will be manufactured a wine, no doubt excellent, but very far from squaring with the notions of those who might conceive it to be the genuine juice of the grape expressed ten years ago. After having led us through many storehouses, and displayed to our admiring eyes some thousands of butts, Mr. Domecq at last paused before one that looked the very chieftain of the race, being in size like three single tuns rolled into one: here was imprisoned the celebrated "madre de vino," or mother of wine, a butt of which he valued at a thousand pounds; and was never to be procured out

of Spain. The "madre" was at once the oldest and finest wine in his stores, and was applied to the sole use of flavouring the contents of other casks by a small addition of its precious virtues. Nor was its proprietor satisfied with merely explaining these things; he filled me a bumper of the costly juice, for which I thanked him at the time; and as pleasant recollections of the same still linger in my memory, I repeat my thanks again. More than one glass would have been a rash experiment, for an extreme age had not only given it an exquisite aroma and a consistency nearly approaching to that of a liqueur, but had increased its potency to a degree which was the more dangerous from being imperceptible to the taste.

The direct road between San Lucar and Xeres, and especially the circuitous route by which we travelled, enjoy the reputation ascribed to Hounslow Heath a century ago. During the winter, rumour had been busy with reports of various robberies committed on these roads by parties of "salteadores," who seemed to vanish as suddenly as they appeared; but to such tales C—— and I paid little heed. The love of the marvellous, we remarked to each other, was very strong among Andalucians, and excites

their inventive powers whenever the word "robber" is introduced into conversation. It so happened, however, that as soon as we had made up our minds to travel the road which bore the worst character of the two, all the reports we had heard seemed wonderfully veracious and consistent. Our double-barrels were accordingly put into a state of preparation, bullets cast, cartridges made, and we set forth full of resolves to be stopped by nothing but our own good will and pleasure. All these preparations, however, came to nought; nobody started up to dispute our determination, and we accomplished our journey unscathed in limb and purse. Once, it is true, when four horsemen bore down upon us, riding across the country abreast, I thought the time had come to test our resolves; on a nearer approach we perceived them to be armed to the teeth; but our calesero, as soon as their visages could be descried, recognised them as people of his acquaintance, who had started that morning to unload a contraband cargo which was expected on the coast. C——, however, who had made up his mind for a skirmish, was loth to be disappointed, and turned a deaf ear to this explanation; he jumped out of the calesa, and strode on ahead to a defen-

sible position, where he halted to receive the enemy. The object of this movement was perfectly understood by the contrabandistas, who shouted out to him, "No teng' usted cuida'o" (be not uneasy), and without adding more than the usual salutation, passed us at a rapid pace. There was, however, no small reason for the evil reputation borne by this road. Amid all the rumours concerning its insecurity, some of which were exaggerated and others false, there remained many instances of brigandage, the authenticity of which could not be disputed; at the same time, no steps were taken by the authorities to establish patrols, or otherwise provide for the safety of travellers. Every one was therefore compelled either to carry arms or hire an escort; and for better security, it was the fashion to unite in large parties, and effect the passage of the road protected by numbers, and the addition of armed men. Even this precaution sometimes proved unavailing,—an instance of which I have related in a previous chapter.

Although, as I have stated, we encountered nothing to justify the evil character of the road, the day was not fated to pass without incident; such as it was, it partook of a ludicrous rather than a serious

aspect, and served to give a mirthful turn to our thoughts, while traversing the uninteresting tract between San Lucar and the Port.

It so happened, that our intended journey having been noised about the town, two travellers proceeding in the same direction had determined to avail themselves of the protection afforded by the terrors of our double-barrels. Our countrymen, I may remark, enjoy in Andalucia the reputation of occasionally doing mad things, and one of them is to stand by their comrades in danger; instead of imitating the Andalucian, who obeys the first law of nature—generally the only law obeyed here—and withdraws his person as speedily as possible from scenes of strife. For these reasons was our company sought on this occasion; and the honour we could not find it in our hearts to decline, especially when we learnt from our calesero, who communicated this intelligence as we were rattling over the ill-paved streets, that the travellers belonged to the fair sex, and had been waiting in the cold two long hours in order to join company. Moreover, he communicated one or two circumstances that could not fail to deepen the interest we felt, or ought to have felt, in our feminine fellow-travellers: it transpired that the twain con-

sisted of mother and daughter, the latter of whom, an actress, was proceeding to Xeres, to be united that very day to the swain of her choice. As soon as we came in sight of them, a short way out of the town, our calesero, judging that the van was the post of danger, proceeded to place us in front by a *manœuvre* common enough among whips on the roads here. This consists in driving furiously up to the vehicle ahead, as if with the design of riding it down; then wheeling smartly to the right, and so passing on to the front. The first part was performed very well; we dashed up till our horse's nose came in contact with a small box behind the bride's calesa, the sole luggage of the pair; but in turning aside, our calesero by no means displayed equal expertness: the wheels became locked, and for a moment or two the vehicles wrestled for a fall. I blush to confess that I felt considerably relieved when I saw the near wheel of our antagonists' vehicle rise into the air, thereby portending its approaching downfall; and then the whole affair came with a great crash to the ground, the fair occupants being precipitated from their seats, and compelled to roll in the dust. Before I had jumped out to assist them, they were on their feet, and unhurt; the

mother pale with rage and fear, and the daughter trying to save her fan from the hoofs of the prostrate and kicking horse. To raise up their calesa was the next business, and this we succeeded in doing after some little trouble. While thus engaged, a friend of the bride rode up, who, upon hearing the circumstances of the disaster, volunteered to stay by them and become their escort. In the mean time the pair sat down upon a bank by the roadside, but not in silence. The maternal voice was elevated to the loudest tones of indignation, and poured forth an unbroken stream of reproaches bitter and vehement. Entertaining no doubt as to the party against whom they were directed, I did not care to listen very attentively at first, and only discovered by a chance word that these wrathful effusions were launched, not against ourselves, the real culprits, but against the luckless daughter, who sat by her side. By some strange process of reasoning, she accused the latter of having caused the mishaps in which they had both shared. "I knew this would happen," she exclaimed; "for it's always the way when I accompany you. I blame nobody for this but you; it's all your fault." These were the last words I heard as we drove off, and left

them preparing to follow more leisurely. Some months afterwards I happened to mention this circumstance to a friend; on a sudden he interrupted me, and said, "I met this couple a short time ago. I was proceeding from Cadiz to Seville, in the steamer which plies on the Guadalquivir, when to our misfortune the boat struck upon one of the numerous mud-banks in the river, and in spite of every effort of the crew, remained aground for the night. Among the passengers on board was this lady, such as you have described her, and a younger one, whom I took to be her daughter: I am, moreover, certain of their being the same pair, from the mother using the expressions you have mentioned; she reproached her daughter as soon as the disaster occurred for being the author of it, and during the night I heard her repeatedly exclaiming, 'It's all your fault; It's all your fault.'"

CHAPTER V.

THE GUADALQUIVIR—ORANGE GROVES OF SEVILLE—CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION OF THAT CITY—THE CATHEDRAL—ITS IMPOSING ASPECT—THE GIRALDA—THE LONJA—THE ALCAZAR—PETER THE CRUEL—THE TOBACCO MANUFACTORY—CARLIST PRISONERS—THE GARROTE VIL—EXECUTION OF A CRIMINAL—THE OLD ALAMEDA—THE INQUISITION LATTERLY A POLITICAL ENGINE—A SECRET OF THE PRISON-HOUSE.

THE Guadalquivir is far from being a river upon which the traveller may gaze with rapture. From San Lucar to Seville its tide is dull, its waters cloudy, its current lingering, and its banks canal-like and low. Even the poets who celebrated the other streams of the Peninsula, and sang of the golden sands of the Tagus, could make nothing of its mud and sedge, and have discreetly left it unpraised; the most adventurous among them could only discern that it wore an "olive-bearing coronet," meaning thereby, that the olive flourished luxuriantly around its springs. Such an epithet may with some truth

be applied to the upper part of its course, where it flows among slopes on which the olive spreads in thick and dark masses; but below Seville it divests itself by degrees of every feature of beauty till it becomes little else than a mighty drain, meandering leisurely through a vast flat; while, as the steamer follows the windings of the river through these unpicturesque levels, the only living objects visible are the immense herds of cattle which find pasture there. They browse, however, upon a treacherous soil; as it is elevated only a few feet above the surface of the river, they are liable to be swept away whenever an inundation occurs. This happened to thousands during the winter of 1837, when the "great river" was swollen by long-continued rains to an extent never witnessed before by the dwellers on its banks. Not only were these pastures completely submerged, but the country around Seville was converted into a wide sheet of water dotted with villages debarred from all communication with each other: nor did the city itself escape; that portion of it which lies in the vicinity of the old Alameda was flooded, and for some days rendered impassable.

About two leagues below the city, on the right bank of the river, a spur from the low elevations on

that side comes down to the water's edge; on its brow is a chapel marking the site of San Juan d'Alfarache, where it is supposed the Roman town of Osset existed. It is generally late in the evening when the steamer approaches this point, so that the remainder of the voyage is performed in darkness. The traveller, however, hardly requires the powers of vision to tell him he is nearing the queen of Andalusia. Long before the vessel stops, her presence is announced by his entering a cloud of fragrance exhaled by her girdle of orange-groves; so heavy and luscious are the odours of this zone, that the senses feel oppressed; and upon reaching the city, where their influence is lost, one breathes more freely, and experiences a certain sensation of relief.

The times are past when Seville might boast that she was a marvel among cities. Her fame in the present day rests upon the traditions of the past, and upon the undoubted signs of a wealth and magnificence which once rolled through her streets. Her wonders have all an antique and venerable cast; nothing is modern except the decay which is creeping over them and the city they embellish. Of those which rose by Christian hands, there are few that do not date their foundation from a particular era in

her history—the discovery of the new world. This was to Seville, as if a golden wave had suddenly swept up to her walls and as suddenly retired. The flood brought a brilliant but short-lived prosperity, amid which sprang into existence those stately edifices, private as well as public, that now contrast so strikingly with the poverty-stricken air of her population. Yet, although all that could give them life and lustre has long ago departed, though the wealth that once filled their country with pomp and magnificence is lost for ever to Spain, one sees here little of the dreariness observable in most cities that have outlived their golden days. The buoyant spirit of Andalusia still survives to animate the place, and to diffuse its light-hearted gaiety over scenes in which everything bears witness to changed fortunes, and the iron tooth of decay. Her hidalgos saunter through her grass-grown streets, not with moody brows and disconsolate mien, but with an easy indifference to a prospect so familiar, and seem regardless of any other thought but the pleasure of the moment. Give them their paseo, cigar, and café, and their happiness is as complete as was that of their ancestors, who rolled through the city in gilded equipages, attended by trains of lackeys, and entertained each

other in splendour and state. The same spirit is observable through all the other classes of society. Every one seems to regard business as a secondary matter in life, and vies with his neighbour in dedicating as little time to its call as he possibly can. The shopkeeper lounges about his shop for a few hours, and then hies him to the promenade or to the café to join a circle of loquacious friends. The artisan is a close imitator of his master, and may be seen strolling about with his companions at hours when labour in other countries is most industriously pursued. Thus the whole population of Seville appears always to be on the wing, and to be roving about in the enjoyment of an existence as careless as the butterfly's. From this it results that a marked difference between Seville and the other great cities of the province is visibly perceptible to the observer: while the others have bowed to the weight of years and the ruin of their fortunes, and present only a spectacle of sombre desolation, she wears a different aspect though equally stricken by the revolutions of time, and seems bent on forgetting that she ever had been young. Indeed, it would seem as if all, from the highest to the lowest, lived only for amusement. Here are to be seen at the public spectacles

thousands, whose appearance causes one to wonder how they had obtained the few pence necessary to command admission, so plainly is want stamped on their exterior. Yet, in nothing more than this is the nature of the Sevillano shewn: he will readily postpone the claims of hunger to the enjoyment of some favourite diversion, and reserve the greatest portion of his earnings for a few hours at the Plaza de Toros or theatre. The same spirit is to be witnessed among those who aspire to be called gencoel. Amid the throng on the promenade none are more scrupulously attired than they; their mantillas and capas are of the best; yet, follow them home to their evening meal, and the scanty fare to which they sit down reveals at what cost this ostentation and pleasure is purchased. A little bread and salad, washed down with a glass of water, is the repast of those whose garb bespoke opulence and abundance at home. All this outward seeming has, however, the effect of making Seville what it is—a place which so well conceals the ravages of old age beneath the youthful bearing of its people, as almost to deceive the traveller into the belief that its prosperity is not utterly extinct.

This city of eighty thousand inhabitants has extended its limits but little since the dominion of the Moors; the wall they constructed still forms its boundaries, and without it the traveller, except at one or two localities, passes at once from the shadows of houses into the sunshine and solitude of an Andalusian landscape. At whatever gate he emerges, the scene is singularly expressive of loneliness; he looks around him, and beholds neither suburb nor villa, but perhaps a solitary venta, or possibly a cemetery; beyond, he surveys an expanse which, whether it be uncultivated or fertile, is always unenclosed. In general he finds himself in the midst of silence, so that, though the heavens are of the purest blue, and the light falls with brilliant effect upon the scenery, and the atmosphere is clear and limpid to a degree, the prospect withal is so unnaturally lifeless, as to send him back into the city with a strange feeling of depression. Here he wanders through streets so narrow and tortuous that he will perhaps describe the capital of Andalusia as a dense mass of building, pierced by a bewildering network of labyrinths. Should he venture alone among their intricacies, he speedily loses all knowledge of the points of the compass,

and becomes as helplessly lost as if he had penetrated too far into some subterranean catacombs. Here and there a vacant space affords him an opportunity of discerning the spires and towers of churches, overtopping the surrounding houses; and taking these as landmarks, he starts afresh to pursue his intended route; but the attempt is hopeless: on diving into the dark lanes, which seem to conduct him to his destination, he finds himself incessantly turning, and not unfrequently arrives at the very spot from which he had set out.

Happily, however, for the solitary explorer, all the edifices most worthy of note in the city are situated in one particular quarter, and within sight of each other. The Cathedral, Alcázar, Tobacco manufactory, and Lonja, stand at its southern extremity, in close proximity to the wall on that side, and at no great distance from the river. The first-named structure is beyond all question as proud a monument as was ever raised by Spanish hands to the glory of their faith. "Let us," said its founders, "build a church so vast, that those who view it completed shall deem us to have been mad." So gigantic a project was in keeping with the religious enthusiasm that animated Spain in the fifteenth

century; and the undertaking having been begun, was vigorously prosecuted by the pious ardour of successive generations. Amid internal feuds and wars with the Moors, the pile continued to rise until the intentions of the founders were realised by the last stone being placed, amid solemn ceremonies, in the year 1519, exactly one hundred and seventy years after its foundation. As it now stands, a more imposing spectacle can hardly be witnessed than this cathedral; in vastness and grandeur of proportion its form towers among the mighty works of old around it, and presents an aspect of majesty that is indescribably impressive. I will not weary the reader with details, but here are assembled the boldest conceptions as well as the lurking minutiae of Gothic architecture. Giant buttresses, noble arches, airy spires, and sculptured windows, are seen beneath that veil of stony tracery which this architecture delighted to throw over its temples; and all, even to the most wind-beaten pinnacle, stand forth fresh and unclouded by the lapse of centuries. The interior is no less striking. Push aside the leathern hanging at the door, and you suddenly pass from the dazzling glare of noonday into the deep shadows of evening. A vast area

of vaulted gloom is then dimly visible, into which the observer cannot move without experiencing those religious impressions it was the object of the architect to instil through the medium of his art. Around are colossal pillars, rising like towers into the mysterious darkness that shrouds the place, and overwhelming him with a feeling of his own insignificance as he surveys their enormous bulk ; through the upper windows some pale rays straggle in with all the effect of moonlight; the fumes of incense are floating on the air; figures in white and black vestments are gliding to and fro over the marble pavement; a solemnising silence unites with the shadowy light to inspire sentiments of awe ; the stillness is broken occasionally by loud whispers, or the muttered prayers of kneeling worshippers;—in a word, nothing is left undone by the faith that raised this temple to make it the abode of high and holy impressions.

Deeply are they felt at first; but, like all impressions connected with the imagination alone, their effect is of a transient nature; they become weaker on every occasion of repeating the visit; and ere long, one contemplates the grandeur and magnitude of this consecrated structure as little moved by a

devotional spirit as the priestly attendants who minister within its precincts.

These personages performed their duties with an air of listless indifference, which showed how wearisome was their daily task of ceremonial routine. It seemed, too, as if the constant exercise of their calling had banished every ray of intelligence from their minds, for every countenance wore an aspect of vacancy that was painful to witness. If, however, as was probable, these men had grown up from youth in the service of the cathedral, it was then no difficult matter to account for their stolid looks and careless demeanour. There was enough in the conduct of the juvenile acolytes about the cathedral to explain this, for a more graceless set of urchins never made consecrated ground the scene of their pranks. While mass was going on at the altar, they were sometimes to be seen at the back of it, either engaged in a game at hide and seek, or in a bout of fisticuffs; their most common occupation was, however, gambling in some nook with a dirty pack of cards, or playing at draughts upon one of the benches, upon which they had ingeniously carved with their knives a draught-board.

Within the interior of the cathedral are a number

of chapels, in which are to be seen the masterpieces of the Seville school of painting. Here are collected the works of Roelas, Zurbaran, and Herrera, and above all, those of the incomparable Murillo. As this famous master was born within a few leagues of the city, he made it his pride to adorn the walls of its cathedrals, hospitals, and convents, with the choicest productions of his pencil; it is only here that his marvellous powers are to be appreciated, as one beholds the beauty and success which he imparts to every subject his fancy has selected, and the ease with which he has mastered the greatest difficulties of his art. There is one painting in the cathedral, the infant Saviour adored by St. Antony of Padua, that would alone place him in the first rank of painters. The attitude of the infant, surrounded by angels, and bending from the heavens to bless the kneeling saint, so truly represents "treading on ambient air," as to raise the admiration of the beholder to the highest pitch while contemplating the vivid reality the painter has given to a subject that seems almost beyond the power of his art to attempt.

At the north-eastern angle of the cathedral rises the famous tower known as the Giralda. Of all the structures in the city there is not one that will re-

main so impressed upon the traveller's memory as this colossal tower; for, besides its singular form, it is the first object he descries when approaching Séville, and the last to recede into the distance when quitting it. Under the Moorish domination this was the tower from whence the muezzin summoned the Moslems to their devotions in the mosque which formerly occupied the site of the cathedral; it was then only two hundred and fifty feet in height, and was terminated by four gilded globes, the size and splendour of which were the themes of Moorish admiration. These, however, were hurled from their airy thrones by an earthquake in the year 1396; and for a hundred and seventy years the tower remained in a partially ruinous state, until the Cabildo undertook its restoration, and added a hundred feet to its height. The summit is crowned by a gigantic statue of Faith, fashioned of brass, and placed as a weathercock for the benefit of the faithful; hence is derived the name of the tower, Giralda in Castilian signifying a weathercock. The ascent is far less fatiguing than that of structures less elevated, for in place of climbing a series of staircases, the traveller mounts by an inclined plane which runs in a corkscrew fashion from the bottom up to the belfry.

Supposing him to have attained this lofty vantage ground, he looks down upon a panorama, the minutest details of which are commanded by his position. Below is a sea of dark-coloured roofs, amid which steeples, domes, and turrets, rise like rocks above the surface of some turbid and agitated tide; here and there are yawning cavities marking the sites of squares or markets; while the furrows that run in all directions indicate the main streets by which the city is traversed. From the ancient walls, which are dotted by numberless Moorish towers, commences the spacious plain, the natural fertility of which had indubitably laid the foundation of this city's greatness. On the west it is bounded, at no great distance, by a low range of elevations; but in every other direction the ground swells gently up till it meets the horizon, after a rise of many leagues. This wide expanse, so far as the eye can reach, displays at the fitting season a rich and varied prospect of cultivation—rich, rather from the spontaneous bounties of the soil than from the industry and skill employed to call forth its treasures. Nearer the city are clusters of orange groves and vineyards; then come broad tracts of growing corn—for the word fields would be inappropriate here, where

fences and hedges are hardly known; and at wide intervals a few white villages glisten in the sunshine. In the midst winds the Guadalquivir, describing as it rolls silently along a succession of wide curves that increase in intricacy after it has passed the city.

At the base of the Giralda is the Patio de Naranjos, or orange court, another relic of the mosque. Here the Moslems performed the ablutions enjoined by the Prophet, ere entering the holy temple of their faith; and doubtless there were then flowing for that purpose more fountains than the solitary one which now occupies the centre of the court. Its falling waters, together with the orange-trees dispersed around, give an air of peaceful seclusion to the court, and successfully dissipate the gloom cast by the presence of the cathedral and church of the Sagrario on two sides, and the high and massive Moorish walls that bound it on the others. In the northern wall is the entrance through a Moorish gateway, to which has been given the name of the Puerta del Perdon, or gate of Pardon.

Close to the cathedral on the south—so close, indeed, as to be almost overshadowed—stands the Lonja or Exchange of Seville. Unlike its Gothic neighbour, whose vast proportions rise majestically

to the eye, this edifice is, on the whole, simple and unpretending, though spacious and elegantly designed. It was the work of Juan de Herrera, the architect of the Escorial, and consists of a square, each side of which is 200 feet long, and adorned with pilasters in the Tuscan order of architecture. Within is a spacious court, surrounded by arcades on the basement story, above which were apartments connected with the transaction of mercantile affairs. The Lonja, however, now stands to record only the magnificent anticipations of its founders. It was here that the commerce of Spain and the Indies was to be centred; here were to assemble the merchants of Europe, and behold the golden streams which flowed from the distant provinces of the Spanish Empire; now it is deserted and grass-grown, and for 200 years has only opened its gates to the passing traveller. From the basement a wide and beautiful staircase of native marble conducts to a suite of apartments running round three-fourths of the edifice, and all exhibiting a profusion of ornament. Here are deposited the archives of the Indies—all that remains to Spain of her connexion with the Western World. As you cast a glance through the trellis-work that protects these docu-

ments from injury, what a host of associations is awakened ! The faint and scarcely legible characters traced on these ancient rolls are in the handwriting of those who first shouted the battle-cries of the Old World on the shores of the New, and won empires for their masters. We look upon the despatches of Columbus, Pizarro, and Cortes, written amid the scenes they were the first to reveal to wondering Europe, and some of them probably penned by hands that were fresh from bloody triumphs over the hosts of Mexico and Peru. Besides these memorials there were others of a different nature, and which, together with those that I have named, must to a Spaniard make the round of these apartments fraught with painful recollections. In one case I saw a series of papers entitled "Contracts for provisioning the Invincible Armada"—that mighty armament in which were shipwrecked the pride and power of Spain, when both seemed proof against disasters. In the others were records more or less connected with the history of her vast colonial empire, of which scarcely a fragment now acknowledges her flag; and the inscriptions they bore were speaking comments upon the fatal policy that directed her counsels whenever the colonies were concerned.

From the despatches of Pizarro to those of the last viceroys, they bore witness to violence and oppression—then, as now, the sole instruments which the Spanish race employs to facilitate the task of government. Of the evil effects of that policy it is not here necessary to speak, but none seem more likely to be lasting than those connected with the helpless dependency to which it reduced the mother-country. For ages, Spain was little better than the pensioner of her colonies, existing upon the tribute she exacted from them, and eating the fruits of their labours. When they escaped from her grasp, she found herself, like the spendthrift whose acres have passed from his hands, not only in beggary, but unfitted by her past life for rising again to wealth. Her arts and manufactures had in the mean time all but disappeared; the natural resources of her soil had been neglected; habits of industry had ceased to exist; and there had grown up among her people and their rulers a disposition to lean upon others rather than rely upon themselves. Such a state of things meets the traveller's eye wherever he moves; and he cannot ~~not~~ converse much with Spaniards, or converse with them upon political subjects, without noticing that they would

gladly get others to do what ought and should be done by themselves alone. They would still seek foreign assistance, in whatever difficulty they might be placed, and think it no shame to have employed foreign troops to fight their own battles.

To the east of the Lonja, a high wall, surmounted with Moorish battlements, hides from view the Alcazar of Seville, once the fortress and palace of its Arab kings, and the residence of many Castilian monarchs. Within its precincts, the traveller who has commenced his tour at Cadiz will behold for the first time the architecture of the Arabs as it is displayed in the construction and decoration of a regal abode. The characteristic horse-shoe arch is everywhere used; walls and roofs are adorned with arabesque devices; the marble columns are slender and quaintly fashioned; and the mingling of open courts with halls and corridors gives a thoroughly Oriental air to this ancient edifice. By far the most imposing of its halls is that of the ambassadors', which may vie with any in the Alhambra in point of spaciousness and embellishment. It is a double cube placed vertically, being twice as high as it is long; and the effect of this, heightened as it is by the remains of the once gorgeous decorations that

overspread the walls, and the gloom that fills the upper portion, is inconceivably striking. In the days of the Arab kingdom, the scene must have been one of no common magnificence when this noble hall was prepared to receive the ambassadors of neighbouring potentates. The colouring on the walls, which is now dim and faded, must then have been bright and dazzling to the eye, and, joined to the gold which was lavished on the roof, and shone in a thousand shapes, could not fail to present a spectacle which to the Oriental imagination of the beholders must have seemed the work of enchantment. On the marble floor the throne of the monarch was raised; and here, surrounded by the splendour of his court, he gave audience to the strangers. If the object of all this display was to impress them with a notion of the power and riches of the kingdom, nothing, indeed, was wanting to create that impression, and they must have departed bewildered and overawed by the spectacle of barbaric pomp they witnessed.

Like almost all palaces, this one has a blood-stained spot to show. In the Patio de Azulejos was murdered the master of Santiago, Don Fadrique, by the orders and almost under the eye

of his half-brother, Peter the Cruel. The tragedy is commemorated in an ancient ballad, that for pathos and touching simplicity has few equals in the Spanish language; and enlists every sympathy of the reader for the fate of the master, whose manly yet trusting nature it contrasts with the perfidy of the kingly murderer. It is singular, however, that connected with this monster of cruelty, there are more traditions preserved in Seville than with regard to any other of his royal brethren on the Castilian throne, San Fernando himself not excepted; and it would even seem as if he had been a favourite with the population of the city. The truth is, that the ferocious deeds his biographers record were done upon the nobles alone; and that, however perfidious himself, he suffered no acts of injustice to be committed with impunity upon the humbler class of his subjects. At the gate of the Monteria, the principal court in the Alcazar, there once existed an elevated platform of stone, surmounted by a chair of marble. Here the monarch, according to the Eastern fashion of dispensing justice at the gates of a palace or city, gave audiences to the people, heard complaints, and redressed grievances. By such means

he gained their goodwill; and some of his decisions that have descended to our own times bear the stamp of a species of justice that was well calculated to win the popular approbation, inasmuch as it was based upon the law of retaliation, always an acceptable one to the rude and unreflecting. From among many judgments attributed to him I shall quote one that has been preserved by tradition, probably from its being regarded at the time as a masterpiece of wisdom and justice.

It so happened that one of the canons of the cathedral had seduced the daughter of a poor shoemaker : on the latter upbraiding him with his crime, an altercation ensued, the result of which was that the outraged father was stabbed to the heart. So atrocious a deed could not without scandal be passed over by the church, and the criminal was accordingly summoned before her tribunal; his sentence was a mockery of punishment, being merely the suspension from his ecclesiastical functions for one year. At the expiry of that period the priest was assisting in the procession of the Corpus Christi, when among the bystanders there happened to be the son of the murdered man. At the sight of the murderer,

thus walking abroad unpunished, the youth forgot everything but the thirst for vengeance, and slew him in the same manner that his father had perished. He was immediately seized and conducted to the king, in order that he might be summarily dealt with for the heinous crime of slaying an ecclesiastic. On the monarch being apprised of the motives which had urged the young man to commit this deed, he inquired what sentence had been imposed on the ecclesiastic for the homicide of the father, and was informed that one year's suspension from his duties was the total of his punishment. On learning this, the king next demanded the occupation of the youth, and finding that he was a shoemaker, like his father before him, condemned him to one year's suspension from his vocation of making shoes.

Behind the Alcazar, and on the outside of the city wall, stands a huge edifice of modern construction, whose aspect causes no little perplexity as to its real purpose; for while the exterior has the air and proportions of a palace, it is surrounded by a dry ditch, and would, on a pinch, stand a short siege. This is the royal manufactory of tobacco; and, when I first beheld it, was invested with a

more than usually warlike appearance, defences and batteries being thrown up at each angle, and all communication with the city cut off. This was done with the intent of resisting the forces of Gomez, who a short time before had swept through Andalusia, and at one time threatened to pay the city a hostile visit; but after approaching within a few miles of it, he wheeled abruptly to the south, and pursued his march almost to the gates of Gibraltar.

In the lower part of the establishment is the manufactory of snuff, the machinery of which is put in motion by various teams of mules, whose beauty and docility were a contradiction to the received notions upon these points. With scarcely an exception, they were fine handsome animals, not less than sixteen hands high, and with coats as sleek and glossy as satin. Neither words nor whip were required to direct their movements, but at the ringing of a bell twice they started on their rounds; on its ringing three times, the whole came to a stop, and so remained until the signal was again given to move on.

From this scene of silence and method, it was somewhat of a transition to enter the vast apart-

ments in which were congregated the female makers of cigars, and where a perfect Babel of tongues stunned the ear. I believe that about three thousand are thus employed; and as there appeared to be no restraint on their conversational powers, the reader may conceive that so many feminine voices in shrill exercise produced an effect that left anything but an agreeable impression behind it. I must, however, do them the justice to say that their hands were no less busy than their tongues, never ceasing to roll up the tobacco into the required shape; and before each maker there were generally half a dozen bundles of cigars to bear witness to her dexterity and industry. On an average, each pair of hands makes two hundred cigars a-day. In another apartment we beheld about six hundred men engaged in the same employment. In going through this room, I was particularly struck by the pale and cadaverous aspect of every countenance, and could not help forming impressions unfavourable to the wholesomeness of the occupation. On inquiring, however, of one man, who seemed to be the "oldest inhabitant" of the place, he informed me that such was not the case, and that he had been forty years in the establishment without suf-

fering from any worse malady than pains in the chest. In summer, it sometimes happened that the odour of the tobacco caused some of the workmen to become giddy and sick; but beyond that he knew of no worse effects from inhaling its fumes, and that the mortality was not greater among them than in other pursuits. As the manufacture of tobacco is a royal monopoly, there are no other establishments for the making of cigars than those under the Crown, of which, besides this one, there may be half a dozen scattered over Spain. Notwithstanding, however, the immense numbers here fabricated, it is questionable whether the supply is equal to the demand in a country like this, where the cigar is to the inhabitants the breath of their nostrils, and to the poorest, even more than to the higher classes, has become a necessary of life. In spite, therefore, of the rigours of a prohibitive system, a vast deal of smuggling goes on; and as it is the interest of every smoker—that is, of every Spaniard—to give it encouragement, the revenue must be defrauded to a serious extent. Indeed, the defiance of the law seems to be attended with complete impunity. It is no uncommon sight to behold men hawking about tobacco from house to house,

with little show of secrecy. For this, the penalty according to law, is ten years of presidio; but in effect it has become completely inoperative, as is shown by the fact I have stated.

The words law and presidio are connected in one's thoughts with places of durance, of which there is but one in Seville. The old prison was situated in the Calle de las Sierpes, but now exists no more, having been demolished in order to make place for a splendid hotel and café. Previously, however, to its destruction I visited it, in order to indulge my curiosity with a glimpse of a class of prisoners who were its temporary inmates, and of whom I had heard a great deal. While Spain was the theatre of the Carlist war, one of those roving bands that supported the cause of the Pretender, by sparing neither friend nor foe, had descended into Valentia with the view of ravaging the country, which was generally favourable to the Queen's cause; here, however, the plundering horde, for it scarcely deserved the name of army, was encountered by the royal forces and effectually checked, being routed with the loss of many prisoners. These were now lodged in the old prison, previous to their conveyance to a much securer

abode within the sea-girt fortifications of Cadiz, which at that period of the war was the general receptacle for those "facciosos" who might be captured on the borders of the Southern provinces. In the first story of the building, which was in a partially dilapidated condition, I found the quarters of the officers and men. A small detachment of "nacionales" kept guard, and occupied the corridor that ran round the patio or open court that forms the centre of every Andalucian dwelling; at the various doors opening into it, sentries with loaded muskets were posted. I was far from expecting to see anything resembling regular uniform on the persons of the prisoners, but I confess I was unprepared for the rabble-like appearance they presented. Some were mere boys of fourteen or fifteen years of age, and appeared to have been supplied from that swarm of youthful beggary and crime that infests the streets of Spanish cities. These were confined in a cell apart from the others, and on my approach desisted from their squabbles to assume the mendicant's whine and solicit charity. The others had nothing either in their bearing or habiliments to denote the soldier. As I looked through the iron grating that served as

door to the gallery in which they were secured, I saw what seemed a mob of peasantry of rather more savage aspect than usual.

Few were without the Valencian manta, their cloak by day, and blanket by night; beneath which were visible tattered and mud-stained garments of every hue and shape peculiar to the northern provinces. The greater number sat on the floor, supporting themselves against the walls of the gallery; and in this attitude remained as immovably fixed as if chained to the spot. The most striking feature of the scene was the silence that reigned among the wretched throng. It rarely happens that the national vivacity is depressed, but here it was thoroughly quenched, and one and all seemed too dispirited to exchange words, or even to look at each other. Generally they sat as I have described, gazing moodily on the opposite wall, or reclining their heads on their knees, either asleep or feigning to be so. I had asked and obtained permission to enter this den, but my purpose changed during the few minutes that I made these observations. Through the gratings there poured forth from the interior an effluvium that resembled the breath of the pestilence, and of so sickening an effect that

with difficulty I retained my position for the short time that I overlooked the scene within. The impossibility of inhaling such a poisonous atmosphere without experiencing worse consequences was self-evident; and when I turned away from the spot, it was with pity for the wretched beings thus crowded together into a narrow compass, and too surely imbibing and communicating the seeds of disease and death. These anticipations were unhappily realised not long afterwards. A short time after their removal to Cadiz, typhus fever of a malignant kind broke out among the prisoners, and swept them off by scores. Their fate was no doubt connected with the loathsome state of the prisons into which they were thrust at the end of each journey, but it was not a little accelerated by sheer starvation. The only allowance for food supplied by the authorities was a halfpenny per diem to each prisoner, out of which he had to sustain existence in the best way he could. Generally speaking, he purchased with one farthing a crust of bread, and with the other a salad; and unless he succeeded in begging or stealing an addition, this was all the fare upon which he supported the fatigue of a long march. From these causes it happened that few survived their journey

to Cadiz, for those who did not sink by the way were so exhausted and feeble, that on the fever breaking out they were cut off after a few days' illness.

The inhuman treatment of prisoners was a feature common to the contending parties in the civil war, and it would even seem as if, on certain occasions, they vied with each other in inflicting cruelties on all who fell into their hands. Of the atrocities perpetrated by the Carlists I both heard and read much; and making every allowance for exaggeration, it was not to be concealed that their cause was stained by barbarities that would have become a race of savages.* On the other hand, the Queen's forces were not slow to retaliate; and the murder of Cabrera's mother, by one of the generals of the Constitutional army, will ever remain one of the

* In a pamphlet published at Valencia, by an officer of the Constitutional army, who had been taken prisoner by the Carlists, it was stated that he and his comrades, after being subjected to privations and inhumanities of no ordinary kind, were at one time denied food by their captors for such a length of time as to be driven by hunger to the revolting necessity of partially devouring the corpse of a fellow-prisoner. The statement is so horrible that one hesitates to yield it belief; yet after all, it is scarcely credible that it would be publicly made by one whose comrades were at the time alive, and in a position to give it a contradiction, if untrue.

foulest deeds committed during that unhappy contest.

Following my conductor to another grated door, which he unlocked and pushed open, I passed forward without inquiry, and found myself in a small and gloomy chamber, lighted by a narrow window high up in the wall. My first impulse was to turn back, for this was the cell of the officers; and as I considered that curiosity was hardly a sufficient excuse for intrusion among them, I felt I had no business there. However, it was too late to retreat, and, moreover, my entrance was unheeded by the whole party, whose attention seemed too deeply engrossed in various ways to notice the presence of a stranger; so that if unwittingly I enacted the part of the "*Curioso Impertinente*," I could reflect with satisfaction that it was before an audience whose eyes were sealed. The cell was tenanted by six officers, whose beds encroached upon its narrow dimensions, and scarcely left a passage for walking. Up and down this one of them was pacing with hasty strides, as if seeking relief from anxious thoughts; the others, with one exception, sat round a bed, which they had converted into a card-table,

and by the aid of a dirty pack of cards, were buried in oblivion of everything but the interest of the game, upon which some small coins were staked. The remaining prisoner, though excluded from the game, displayed even more excitement than the players in its progress, and eagerly bent over it, while his eyes followed with the watchfulness of a lynx every card that fell from their hands. There was nothing in the appearance of these men to mark the soldier or the gentleman. Their uniform was simple and unpretending, consisting of a surtout and pantaloons of green cloth, with a cap of the same colour, the whole being devoid of lace or ornament of any kind. Indeed, had they been clothed in the ordinary garb of the country, they would have passed for farmers or shopkeepers, from which class it is probable they had originally sprung.

Strange to say, although human life is but cheaply valued in Spain, nothing is more rare than to see it forfeited for the commission of crimes. As regards the infliction of punishments for offences of an atrocious kind, the law there is as severe as it is in our own country; and, like it, demands blood for blood. There is, however, a manifest dis-

like to carrying its last sentence into effect; and any plea or subterfuge is accepted by the ministers of justice in order to cover this aversion, which, without exception, they share with the nation at large. Whence this state of feeling arises it is difficult to say; but it is certainly a most striking anomaly in the national character, that the same people which hesitates not to butcher its prisoners in cold blood, will shrink from enforcing the deliberate award of justice when it demands the life of a murderer. I had occasion to make these remarks on witnessing the execution of a criminal by the "garrote vil," a mode of inflicting death practised, I believe, nowhere but in Spain. The sufferer was stained with the blood of two victims—namely, his wife and her aunt, both of whom his navaja had deprived of life. It appeared that on account of his profligacy his wife had forsaken him, and taken refuge under the roof of her aunt, where she was afforded shelter for some time. At length the ruffian indicated a desire for her return, which was met with a refusal; and on proceeding to the house where she resided, an altercation on the subject ensued between the parties, the result of which was his drawing his knife upon the defenceless pair, and wounding them so

desperately as to cause their death in a few days. Being speedily apprehended, his trial commenced at the instance of the husband of the aunt; and it is worthy of remark, as illustrative of the tardy pace of justice in this land, that eighteen months elapsed between the commission of this murderous act and its expiation on the scaffold. According to the procedure in criminal cases, his trial commenced in the court of "primera instancia" of San Lucar la Mayor, within whose jurisdiction the outrage was perpetrated; and, after the usual delay, was terminated by his condemnation to ten years' imprisonment. From this sentence the husband of the murdered woman appealed to a higher court, which reversed the decision of the inferior one, and imposed the penalty of death by the garrote vil. Another appeal was, however, permitted by law for the accused, and he availed himself of it; but in the end the last sentence was confirmed, and, as a preliminary to his execution, he was placed "en capilla." This ceremony is emphatically the preparation for death; the criminal is now bid to resign every hope in this world, and to think only of eternity. For this purpose two days are allowed him, during which time a priest is in attendance

day and night, whose office it is to prepare the guilty wretch for his approaching doom, and to administer such consolations as the Roman Catholic creed provides for these occasions. On the morning of the third day the capilla terminates, and he is led forth to execution.

This closing scene of a criminal's career is now transferred to a spot which was formerly dedicated to very different purposes; and nothing more strikingly marks an altered state of feeling in Catholic Spain than the indifference with which the transmutation is regarded. Without the ancient wall of the city, and not far from the bridge across the Guadalquivir, stands a huge pile of building which was once a convent of Agustinos descalzos, and was commonly known by the title of the Convento del Populo. It received this name from the circumstance of a notable miracle having occurred in the neighbourhood; and as the performer in the wondrous spectacle was too holy an object to be sheltered in a private dwelling, it was forthwith committed to the custody of the Augustines, in order to be publicly displayed for the benefit of the faithful. It happened that, during a great inundation in the year 1626, the waters of the river entered the vestibule of a house not far dis-

tant from the convent, and rose up to a picture of Nuestra Señora del Populo, which was suspended there. Still continuing to rise, the tide detached it from the wall; and, as the story goes, for three days afterwards it was seen floating upright on the surface of the river, while the lamp that was usually kept burning before it still followed in faithful attendance without sinking or being extinguished. The holy fathers lost no time in claiming this wonderful picture, whose virtues could not fail to sanctify the roof under which it rested; and it was accordingly placed in their convent, which, from this event, began to be known as that of the Populo. The time, however, arrived when monachism was suppressed in Spain; and the convent being at the same time confiscated, was applied by the government to the uses of the state, and converted into a prison for every class of delinquents. Among the other alterations consequent upon this change, there was constructed at the back, which faces the Plaza de Toros, the place of execution for criminals. This consisted of a platform raised to a level with the top of the lofty wall surrounding the convent, and so placed as to overlook a space of ground calculated to contain a large assemblage of spectators. A short time before

the fatal hour sounded, I was on this spot, which I expected to see filled with a dense crowd. In this, however, I was mistaken: so far from witnessing the multitude which a similar spectacle would draw in England, I beheld only a gathering neither numerous nor respectable; such as it was, it was wholly composed of the lowest class of the populace. The greater part of them were formed into groups, which spread over the area without preventing a passage from one side to the other; a liberty which the water-venders were not slow to turn to advantage, as was evident from the drawling cries that rose from every quarter. As yet, the platform, round which ran a slight iron railing, was without an occupant, so that there was displayed in full view the apparatus of death rising in grim state from the centre. It was as simple and as devoid of repulsive features as such an instrument could be, yet the headsman's axe was uncertain and lingering compared with its fatal embrace. The machine was an arm-chair, solidly constructed of dark wood; to the back was attached a substantial post, about four feet high. Just about the place where the neck of a sitter would reach, something like an iron chain could be observed. This is the imme-

diate instrument of death, for the chain being put round the neck of the criminal, is tightened by means of an iron bar in the hands of the executioner, who uses it in the same manner that the waggoner secures his bales, by twisting with a wooden staff the cords that bind them. A turn or two of the bar suffices to produce suffocation, and that with less amount of pain to the condemned wretch—or, at all events, with fewer tokens of suffering—than probably any other method of extinguishing life adopted by the penal code of civilised nations. Shortly after the clock of the cathedral had sounded the appointed hour, a few soldiers appeared upon the platform and took up their station at the back of it; then came some officials, clothed in black, among whom the executioner and his attendant were to be distinguished by the professional way in which they inspected the apparatus I have described; and finally, after a slight delay, the criminal himself came into view.

Neither groans nor execrations greeted his appearance, and the deepest silence prevailed while he moved to the chair, though with a feeble step. As soon as he had placed himself in it, the executioners advanced to perform the first part of their

office, which consists in binding the legs and arms of the criminal to the corresponding parts of the chair. This was the work of a few moments, during which I had opportunity to note the remarkable garment in which he was arrayed. It was a robe that enveloped him from the neck to the feet, so that, with the exception of the head, his person was wholly concealed; and its singularity arose from the strangeness of the colours, which were white and yellow, the latter being apparently daubed over the other in great splashes. It is difficult to give an idea of the extraordinary spectacle presented by the wretched man as he sat encased in this gaudy and fantastic death-gear, which seemed to mock the pale visage that surmounted it. Such, however, has been the usage in Spain for ages; and the murderer and the heretic have marched in this attire, the one to the scaffold and the other to the stake, bearing the ignominy of which its colours and devices are supposed to be emblematical. The last strap being firmly braced, the executioners retired, and gave place to a priest, who formed one of the surrounding group: he now came forward to receive the last confession of the criminal, and administer to him the consolations of his faith. For this purpose he

bent his ear down to the mouth of the other, and raising the skirt of his black robe, drew it over his own head as well as that of the speaker, in order that no part of their conference might reach the bystanders near him. This, however, was perhaps a needless precaution, for as soon as he proceeded to his duty, the others on the stage retired to its furthest limits, and left him alone with the confessing sinner. When his task was done, and he had withdrawn to the back of the platform, the executioner once more stepped forward, and grasped the fatal bar, while an assistant placed himself at his right hand. The criminal then began to recite the Apostles' Creed, every word of which, as his voice was clear and firm, was distinctly audible, even at the distance where I stood. When he had pronounced the words "Y en su unico hijo Jesu Christo," the bar revolved with the quickness of thought, the assistant cast at the same instant a black cloth over his face, and his lips were sealed for ever. At the same time the exclamation, "Ave Maria purissima!" burst with a shout from the lips of the spectators, some of whom continued to repeat it for a few moments, as if it could still reach his ears. He was, however, beyond the influence of mortal sounds, as

death appeared to be nearly instantaneous: a convulsive quivering of the limbs for a second or two was all that indicated the struggle of existence parting with its earthly frame; and when it was over, and the cloth had been removed from his countenance, his features exhibited no traces of pain or suffering, but were as composed and placid as those of a sleeper. The crowd did not linger long upon the place after this last act of the ceremony was performed, and before half an hour elapsed it was deserted by all but the few stragglers it usually displayed.

At the north-western extremity of the city there is to be seen a spacious promenade, that, with its alleys of trees and stone benches, seems planted like an oasis in the midst of the dense mass of houses which cover that quarter. This is called the Old Alameda, and although now abandoned to solitude and neglect, under its shady elms, in the palmy days of Seville, were its daughters and gay gallants wont to assemble. Here was generally placed the scene of those adventures which the older Spanish novelists and dramatists loved to connect with the capital of Andalusia. Since, however, the construction of those beautiful walks which extend along the bank

of the Guadalquivir to the southward, and which well merit their name of "Las Delicias,"—for, while wandering amid that leafy city of tree, flower, and shrub, the spectator feels as if transported to a scene of enchantment—since that period the old Alameda has fallen from its high estate, and sees few traversing its far-famed avenues. At the southern extremity stand two time-worn columns, part of the ancient temple of Hercules, erected by the Romans: these now support statues of Hercules and Cæsar, also the relics of Roman art, but which, as long inscriptions testify, have been dedicated by Spanish servility to the emperors Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second. The most striking object, however, that intrudes upon the Alameda, is the gloomy and deserted edifice at its northern angle. Here, after many changes, the tribunal of the Inquisition for the last time held its dark and secret meetings, and carried on the work of persecution against freedom of thought and liberty of conscience. Originally the edifice was possessed by the Jesuits, and was long a college, in connexion with their order, for the education of poor students; but on their expulsion from the kingdom, the Inquisition sought and obtained licence to set up their court within its walls.

Previous to that time, the seat of the tribunal was in the ancient Moorish fortress that protected the suburb of Triana, on the opposite side of the river: probably that structure was selected from the number and security of its dungeons, which were then the chief agents in the conversion of the unhappy Jews, and in reconciling, as it was termed, the conquered Moors to the Catholic faith. Established here in 1481, the office proceeded to its accursed work of imprisoning, torturing, and burning; and by this means, as an inscription on the walls triumphantly recorded, succeeded before the year 1524 in causing twenty thousand heretics to abjure their errors. In the same detestable spirit it proclaimed, that more than a thousand persons, obstinately wedded to their heresies, "had been delivered to the fire, and burnt." The ancient fortress having, however, fallen into a ruinous state, was abandoned by the Holy Office, who transferred their tribunal to the city, and after various changes of residence were finally accommodated with the vacant college of the Jesuits. Here they exercised their powers until the Inquisition was extinguished throughout Spain, in the year 1820. The edifice then became a military barrack; but during a popular commotion in

1823, some rioters entered it, and accidentally setting fire to a store of powder which it contained, a considerable portion of the building at the back was demolished, and now lies a mass of shattered and blackened walls. Since that event, which probably rendered it unfit for the services of the state, this handsome edifice has been consigned to abandonment and neglect, and now confronts with ill-omened aspect its partner in desolation, the once gay and crowded Alameda.

Of the Quemadero, or structure upon which the victims of the Inquisition perished by fire, no traces now remain. Its site was placed without the walls of the city, between the Puerta de la Carne and the Cementerio General; but in 1809 it was razed to the ground by the French, and that so effectually as to efface every vestige of its existence. According to report, its shape was an oblong square, the material used being brick; and at each corner stood a pillar sustaining a statue of terra cotta. Tradition, moreover, relates that the first to expire upon the pile was the artificer who constructed it: it is certain, however, that the last to be committed to its flames was a blind beata, or sister of charity, in the year 1781; but in her case the corpse was burnt at the

stake, death having been previously inflicted by another mode.

Many years previous to its abolition, the Inquisition had ceased to take cognisance of heretical depravity, as it was styled, and had become little else than a political engine in the hands of Absolutism. Its dungeons were filled as usual, and the scaffold from time to time received its tribute of victims; but I doubt much if, among the numbers who thus suffered, a single one was immolated for denying the established faith of the country. The truth is, that during that period there had grown up among the enlightened class, and consequently the most formidable, an indifference to religion itself; and the Inquisition was not slow to perceive that such a feeling was far from being hostile to the office. Religious apathy, and infidelity, however deeply they may have tainted the minds of a community, have seldom subverted its ecclesiastical institutions; nay, more, there is much less danger for the latter when surrounded by unbelief, than amid the proselytising and fiery spirit of a new sect. There is no enthusiasm in scepticism; it argues, detracts, and sneers, but wants that consuming zeal by which fervent minds are impelled to overthrow not only the prin-

ciples but the works of their opponents, or to perish in the attempt. Thus it happened in Spain, where those who recognised no religious principles whatever—that is, the majority of the Liberal party—were content to leave the Established Church in possession of its rights and immunities, while affecting to view with contempt its doctrines and ceremonies. In this state matters might probably have continued, had not Absolutism been so closely connected with the ancient faith of the country. Its firmest partizans were the priests who attempted to arrest its downfall before the rapid diffusion of constitutional principles, by the usual arguments of tyranny: none of these was so fit for their purpose as the Inquisition, with its widespread system of espionage, its secret denunciations, its midnight arrests and dark tribunals. It furnished a machinery of terror, which was accordingly set in motion for the suppression of Liberalism; and by the relentless severity of its proceedings, proclaimed both the fears and the policy of the ruling powers. From that moment its fate was decided, and on the next convulsion in this agitated country it sank to rise no more, the object of abhorrence to all but the fiercest supporters of absolute authority.

Secret denunciations I have mentioned as forming a part of the system by which the Inquisition swept victims into its dungeons. The mode it adopted was similar in principle, though not in practice, to that of the lion's mouth at Venice, and permitted individuals to prefer accusations against those whom they were willing to impeach and betray. The names of the accusers were never suffered by the Holy Office to transpire, but if it deemed their representations worthy of notice, a visit from its familiars was sure to startle the denounced at some moment when he least expected it, and perhaps be followed by his conveyance to one of its numerous cells. Such a system, by the suspicion and distrust it inspired, was well calculated to repress every expression of opinion, while, at the same time, it invited the selfish or weak to purchase favour for themselves by becoming the denouncers of their friends. Many anecdotes are current in Spain with regard to individuals being betrayed by those on whom they reposed implicit confidence; but I shall only relate one which I heard from the lips of a party who was thus denounced, and in consequence subjected to a visit from the Inquisition.

During the reign of Fernando Septimo, the Abso-

lutist faction for a time enjoyed an ascendancy which it did not fail to support by the terrors of the Holy Office. At that time the leaders of the constitutional party were under proscription, and had no other resource than to become refugees on foreign shores; from whence, however, they did not cease to carry on their schemes for restoring liberty to their country. One of these plans was to establish in England a periodical, to be written in the Spanish language, and in support of Liberal principles; from thence it was to be secretly disseminated through Spain. Such was a project seriously entertained by some of the refugees in London; one of whom, more zealous than discreet, transmitted a prospectus of it to an English merchant then resident in Seville. Our countryman received the paper, and was so far from attaching importance to its contents, or from imagining it involved himself in the schemes of the expatriated Liberals, that he showed it to a friend who happened to enter the room just as he had finished its perusal. In this, however, he was mistaken; the following morning, at an early hour, his dwelling was entered by the officers of the Inquisition, who demanded the document to which I have alluded. Having readily surrendered it, he was then

subjected to a series of interrogatories, all of which seemed to be put under the impression that he was the agent of some formidable conspiracy, organised against the government by the constitutional exiles in London. His statements, however, as to the possession of the document and upon other points, were so probable and consistent, that suspicion could find nothing to seize upon; and after a lengthened examination the functionaries departed, leaving him in no slight astonishment regarding the cause of their visit. It is unnecessary to add, that nothing was further from his thoughts than to suspect his friend of being concerned with it. Time, however, at length threw light upon the affair, while at the same time it brought him his revenge. The downfall of the Absolutist party took place, and was followed by riots which invariably were directed against the detested prisons of the Inquisition. That of Seville, which I have described, was broken into, its prisoners liberated, and archives burnt. Among those who took a part in the work of destruction was a gentleman who, on glancing at one of the manuscripts about to be destroyed, perceived that it related to our countryman, and accordingly rescued it from the flames. This was the act of denuncia-

tion that had subjected his dwelling to a visit from the Inquisition; and, on its being brought to him for perusal, he recognised the handwriting as being that of the friend of whom I have made mention. His revenge on this occasion was as ample as could well be imagined. He invited the denouncer to breakfast, and when the repast was concluded placed before him the evidence of his baseness, without adding a single remark. The other was at once overwhelmed with shame and confusion; and knowing that neither excuse nor apology could be urged, quitted the room in silence, with feelings which no man would envy, added to the conviction that from that day he would be known to the world as a spy of the hated Inquisition.

Subsequently, on my visiting Granada, I was favoured by a Spanish friend there with the perusal of a document which had once formed part of the archives of the Inquisition. The reader may imagine the feelings with which I proceeded to the examination of its contents, from which I anticipated some insight into the arcana of the Holy Office, or perhaps a narrative of dreary persecution and unknown martyrdom. To a certain extent these expectations were disappointed, though the volume

was not without its interest, being connected with a breach of religious vows, and unfolding the spirit in which the office dealt with ecclesiastical offenders. The manuscript, which consisted of rather more than twenty pages, recorded the trial and sentence of a padre guardian, or spiritual adviser to a convent of nuns. Of his offence, it will suffice to say that it involved an unprincipled abuse of his confidential position, and proclaimed the frailty of two of the sisters. The process was conducted after the usual style of the tribunal; no witnesses examined, or proof sought, but every circumstance of guilt elicited by interrogatories addressed to the culprits, and more particularly to the feminine portion of them. By such means the truth was wrung from their lips, together with many details that seemed to be unnecessarily inquired into; and the whole was wound up with the confession and penitent avowals of the arch-culprit himself. Such as they were, the tribunal deemed them of sufficient weight to influence its sentence, which, compared with the magnitude of the offence, will strike the reader as being singularly disproportionate. For three weeks he was to recite, morning and evening, a couple of prayers designed for such offenders, to

be followed by the same number of paternosters. That done, the holy father had expiated his immoralities, and satisfied the justice of his church. What would have been his sentence had he rejected the errors of Romanism, and preached the pure truths of the gospel? In vain would a blameless life have pleaded against an imprisonment of years, rendered unspeakably painful by the various modes which the Holy Office employed to crush the spirit and fortitude of the solitary sufferer.

CHAPTER VI.

LEAVE SEVILLE FOR MOGUER—ESCASENA DEL CAMPO—IMPRI-
 SONMENT THERE—TEXADA—THE CONTRABANDISTA—NIEBLA
 —ITS RUINOUS STATE—EL CONVENTO DE LA LUZ—ITS PRO-
 PRIETORS.

IF the reader takes up the map of Spain and casts a glance upon that portion which lies between Seville and the frontiers of Portugal, he will behold a tract of country level as it borders the coast, but broken into mountains and valleys as it recedes inland. As my eye rested upon the dark shade indicating a region of stern peaks, frowning precipices, and lonely mountain paths, I felt rising strong within me all my attachment for such scenery: "The Sierra, the Sierra!" I mentally exclaimed, and burned with impatience to listen once more to the muleteer's song, and with him breast the mountain side. The arrangements for that purpose were soon completed, and I started on a beautiful May morning for Moguer, a town not far from the boundary line

between the two kingdoms, and situated at the point where the Rio Tinto becomes navigable. Crossing the Guadalquivir by an ancient bridge of boats, we took our way through the suburb of Triana, followed by the curious eyes of such as were astir among the gipsy horde that form its population. These sons of Egypt have abandoned for a residence here, the wandering habits but not the evil propensities of their race; and Triana is notorious as the abode of robbers and desperate characters. When the Cholera swept through Spain, no place suffered so severely as this; fourteen thousand of its inhabitants were said to have been smitten by the pestilence, without however causing any visible diminution in their number. From the heights beyond there is a fine view of Seville and the adjacent country. While we were slowly climbing the steep acclivity, I turned to take a last look at the ancient metropolis of Andalucia. Even in its decay, though forsaken by commerce and industry, the old city bore itself with some of the pride of the haughty hidalgos who once filled it; and, strong in its monuments of former greatness, seemed superior to misfortune. From its white walls extends a vast plain exceeded by none in fertility,

and watered by a navigable river; a combination of advantages which ought to make, and did make it for a time, the most flourishing of towns in the southern provinces. But all these, by the blindness of its rulers, have been rendered unavailing. The golden harvests of Mexico and Peru were preferred to the more solid though less dazzling fruits of agriculture; monopolies sprang up under a false system of political economy; impolitic restrictions were enforced, till at length the productive industry of the country was checked, and old age came on before its time. There is yet hope, however, for Seville; the springs of its resources are not dried up, but only repressed. A wise and enlightened administration would work like a charm upon the country: let it but foster the gifts of which nature has been everywhere so bountiful, and cease to postpone these to the ambition of becoming a manufacturing nation, then might return the golden days of Spain; but when did experience ever warn the rulers of this strange people, or instruct the people themselves?

At San Lucar la Mayor I stopped to dine at the posada, which may be taken as a specimen of the inns throughout Andalucia, and the entertainment

there as that to be usually expected by the traveller. Entering what would be considered in England a pothouse of the commonest order, I found the mistress serving in the only apartment it contained for public accommodation; in one corner two men were playing at cards, and, as usual, seasoning their diversion with disgusting oaths and exclamations.

“What have you to give me to eat?”

“Eggs.”

“Nothing more?”

“Yes; bacalao (stockfish) but dry.”

“And what else?”

“That,” said the hostess, pointing to some very lean sausages hanging from the rafters.

“That will not do.” So with eggs and bread and some wine I made a tolerable dinner. My knife was the navaja, so dangerous in the hand of the intoxicated or infuriated peasant; it is a clasp-knife usually four or five inches long, the blade being broad in the middle and tapering to a fine point; with this he cuts his bread, peels his orange, and, when necessary, lays open the side or deals a gash upon the face of his antagonist. Afternoon came ere I had reached the small village of Escasena del

Campo, the limit of my first day's journey. In the inn no apartment was to be found fit for "gente decente," but I was directed to the cottage of an old woman who had apartments to let to strangers. It was necessary, however, to obtain permission for this purpose from the alcalde; and as that high dignity was enjoying his *siesta*, and could not then attend to affairs of state, I had to encounter some delay. After waiting for an hour, I was at length admitted to the shelter afforded by four tottering walls, and a roof through which daylight was visible in a score of places. My hostess was a very fluent speaker, or rather questioner, and quite took away my breath by the rapidity with which her queries followed one another. In ten minutes she had extracted from me a short account of my history, and my reasons for travelling. To all this I submitted with a good grace, for I knew my time was coming. Seizing an opportunity, I inquired after the health of one of the residents in the village. Then came two or three interrogatories regarding the welfare of some other individuals whom I named, to which she replied with rising curiosity at the extent of my information; and at length I concluded by asking, "How is Don Francisco T——?"

At this last inquiry she arose quickly from her seat, and shading her eyes with her hand, peered curiously in my face.

“Ave Maria!” she cried; “you are the Englishman who was imprisoned here.”

“The same, O grandmother,” I replied.

To explain this allusion, it will be necessary to entreat the reader's patience for a moment. Two years previously, in company with C—— and a Spanish friend who was about to visit a relative in the vicinity, we reached this village late at night, and not a little fatigued. It was not till we were nearly driven to despair that, after a long search in the village, and in another a quarter of a mile distant, we obtained the shelter of the roof under which I was then sitting. This secured, our next thought was to cook some eggs that had fortunately fallen in our way. C—— had managed to procure a frying-pan, and was absorbed in the interesting process of frying them, while I was blowing into a flame a few twigs that made up our fire, when a noise at the door turned our attention thither. To our surprise, the doorway was filled with dark figures; beneath their cloaks were plainly visible the points of drawn swords. One of the group

then advanced into the middle of the room, and politely addressing us, requested to see our passports.

"Passports!" we both exclaimed in a breath.

"Why, we have left them in Seville."

"Who are you?" was next inquired.

"We are Englishmen, who, intending only to spend a day or two here, did not think it necessary to bring our passports from Seville, to which we intend to return."

This reply did not seem satisfactory to our questioner. He consulted with the armed force in the rear, which, during this dialogue, had pounced upon our double-barrelled guns. After a brief consultation, he informed us, as the result of their deliberations, that our presence was required in the council-chamber of the village. Remonstrances were vain, and so, escorted by the band already mentioned, we marched to the hall of justice, where we underwent a long string of interrogatories regarding our objects in coming to the village. Our papers and letters were demanded and given up: among these came to light the letter of introduction in the possession of our Spanish friend, who, by the way, was as negligent as ourselves; and every-

thing plainly showed that we were merely peaceful travellers, and no emissaries of the "faction," as our interrogators were inclined to suppose. Some further consultation then took place among our captors, and at length it was announced to us that we should be detained in custody until the gentleman to whom the letter of introduction was addressed came forward to be responsible for our good behaviour, or the English consul at Seville was communicated with. Loud was our indignation at this treatment; but resistance, of course, was unavailing.

There being no regular prison, we were borne off to a place which was used as the village granary, and ushered into a dismal and spacious barn. As far as we could judge by the light of a solitary lamp, it was devoid of windows, and altogether no bad substitute for a prison. A mattress was next dragged in, a blanket or two thrown upon it, the door locked and barred outside, and we were left to our meditations. What those of my companions in captivity were I do not know, but I was too tired and sleepy to feel very acutely the loss of my liberty; and so it happened that when, next morning, it was notified that we were free to depart, our friend's friend having engaged to answer for our

respectability, I did not fall into ecstasies of joy, but walked out as quietly as if our quarters had been an hotel, and not a place of durancee.

This incident was the commencement of my acquaintance with Don Francisco T——, by whom, as alcalde of the village, our arrest and incarceration were effected in person. The good alcalde, I believe, on further consideration, was inclined to think he had been somewhat over strict in the discharge of his duties. With the natural good feeling, therefore, of an honest heart, he endeavoured, by the abundance of his good offices and the profuseness of his hospitality, to banish from our minds any soreness that might have arisen on that account. On the present occasion his reception of me was that of an old friend; he insisted upon my leaving my lodgings and taking up my abode under his roof; which on the following morning I did, and remained there during the few days I spent in the village. Don Francisco was a wealthy farmer, and no bad specimen of his class. Simple and unassuming in his manners, perhaps even retiring, his ability in the matters of agriculture had made him what he was; in other respects his information did not extend beyond that of the generality of his

countrymen, but he was superior to them in being free from most of the narrow prejudices that warp their minds. I used to contrast him favourably with two farmers from the vicinity of Ronda, who spent a month in a "casa de pupilos" at which I happened to be staying. These men, whatever was the purpose that brought them there, were for the period of their stay almost immovable fixtures in the public room of the house. From breakfast till dinner time, they sat facing each other at the brazier filled with charcoal, by which the room was heated; hats on head, and wrapped in their long cloaks, moodily smoking paper cigars, and seldom exchanging a word with each other, or with any one around. I only saw them smile once, and that was at some piece of gross buffoonery perpetrated by one of the attendants. As regards myself, many words did not pass between us: such as they were, they conveyed to me the information that my country had always been the worst enemy of Spain, had risen only by her downfall, and was fomenting the present civil war for purposes of her own advantage; or, if that was not the subject of their discourse, it was to assure me that England was fast sinking among nations, had passed her prime, and would, in her

turn, be the prey of those whom she had so long plundered.

One trait in the character of Don Francisco pleased me more than any other, because now becoming rare in Spain. It was his old Spanish reverence for the religion of his fathers, and the display of a devotional feeling—to me the more striking, as I had witnessed it nowhere among the population of the towns in which I had been a resident. Infidelity, and a total neglect of the outward forms of the national faith, are there united with the adoption of the Liberal principles of which they are the strongholds. Whenever the word “Dios” occurred in our conversation, he reverentially lifted his hat from his head; and at the “oracion” the whole family joined with him in repeating aloud the prayers set apart for that occasion. When they were concluded, his children came, each in its turn, to kiss his hand; while to myself, and the others who happened to be in the room, they added, “Beso las manos a usted.” After dinner, on the first day of my being an inmate of his house, I expressed a determination to visit Texada, once a Roman city but now in ruins, and distant a league from the village. To go on foot, as I wished to do, appeared

to my host and hostess a most unbecoming thing for a caballero, and both endeavoured to dissuade from the attempt, which they besides evidently considered as something beyond human strength to accomplish. However, they yielded at last to my wishes, and provided me with a guide. The village itself, I may mention, lay on the brow of a declivity that rapidly sank into a level plain, now green with the crops of the year; on the right, at the distance of twelve miles, were seen the white buildings of San Lucar la Mayor, through which I had passed; and right in front, the blue outlines of a spur of the Sierra Morena closed the prospect. Midway between the slope upon which I stood and a corresponding one that rose out of the plain some two leagues distant, was an elevation, which, if not really artificial, was wondrously fashioned by nature's hand into the proportions of a circular mound; this was Texada, the "plaza," or fortress, as my guide called it. In ancient warfare it must have been a place of some strength; the remains of Moorish walls encircle the brow of the eminence: these were constructed, not of stone or brick, but of a kind of concrete formed of gravel and cement, and so durable and tough as to present a stubborn resistance

to the assaults of time and hostile weapons. The process by which they were raised to the required height deserves explanation. The material, when hot, was spread on the wall to the depth of two or three feet; but as it was in a liquid state, wooden boxes were used to confine it, until by cooling it had acquired sufficient solidity to maintain an upright form, and bear the weight of succeeding layers. In many places, both on the interior and exterior of the walls, the apertures were visible in which was inserted the framework of the scaffolding necessary for this purpose: it would appear that the builders had not thought it worth their while to fill them up; and indeed so fresh and recent was the aspect of many portions of their handiwork, that it was not difficult to imagine that the workmen had only that morning quitted the scene of their labours. On the summit, some dilapidated farm offices are the sole representatives of the streets and edifices it once contained; but on the western side, at the foot of the ascent, are to be seen the foundations of baths, in the waters of which Romans and Moors had probably refreshed themselves. According to Rodrigo Cearo, the decay of the place was caused by the insalubrity of the situation, the inhabitants

deserting it on that account for Escasena and Paterna del Campo.

As we returned, my guide paused at a fountain, whose waters flowed into a watering-trough for cattle. Above the jet was the following inscription: "Nuestra Señora de la Luna, Patrona de Escasena, que se ve en el convento de los Padres Carmelitos Calzados, ha parecido en el termino de esta villa" (Our Lady of the Moon, Patroness of Escasena, who is to be seen in the convent of the Carmelite Fathers, has appeared within the boundaries of this township). Respecting the image thus stated to be in the holy keeping of the Carmelite Fathers, my guide gravely related the following tradition:—

"A charcoal burner was plying his occupation in a neighbouring wood, felling and uprooting trees, when in a lonely spot he discovered a muñeca, or image of the Virgin. This he placed in his sack, and carrying it home, proceeded to impart the news to his family. 'Vaya!' said he, 'I have found a curiosity!' and forthwith opened his bag to display it to them: to his surprise, no image was there. The next day he returned to his work: judge of his amazement when he espied the missing image in the very spot where he had originally found it. A

second time he deposited the muñeca in his bag, and to make all sure, he secured the mouth of it, Senor, in this way: he fastened it with twenty knots and more, and immediately sallied homewards to relate the wonderful intelligence. Upon reaching his hut, the bag was opened; but wonderful to tell, in spite of all his precautions, the image had again escaped. A third time, then, he went in search, and found it reposing in its old quarters, as if no mortal hand had ever profaned it; and so it was evident that Our Lady had appeared under the form of the image, and a chapel was consequently erected on the spot where the apparition took place."

Seeing that I listened to this miraculous history without betraying any signs of incredulity, my guide was encouraged to continue:—"Pues, Senor, there happened here another thing equally curious. A farmer took a print of the Virgin, and placed it in the open field under some clay; and for all the rain that fell, not a drop wetted it, and it was seen by many of the pueblo to be as dry as when he first placed it there."

"Possibly he had covered it up so close with the clay that no water could penetrate," was the suggestion of my unbelief.

"No, Señor, he covered it up very loosely indeed:

and more than that—his wheat escaped, while that of his neighbours was utterly ruined by the blight."

In the evening came an invitation to Don Francisco and myself, to celebrate the opening of an *escribania*, or attorney's office, in the village. It came to pass, therefore, that next day, in our holiday attire, we made our way to the scrivener's residence, at the door of which a large party of the guests was grouped. Our entertainer, who was a short man with one eye, ushered us into the *sala* or principal room of the house, where preparations had been made for the festival. On the centre was a table loaded with sweetmeats, flanked by bottles of liqueurs of all colours. After waiting until all were assembled, our host in person proceeded to distribute the *catables* around. First came *merengues*, then liqueurs, next *mostachones* and *biscochos* of various kinds, *panales* or sugar plums, which the water-sellers give along with a glass of water; these were handed round in rapid succession, and washed down with glasses of wine, liqueurs, or the *aguardiente* of the country. On returning home we were joined by two of the guests, to whom I was introduced by Don Francisco, there being some sort of relationship between them. They entered with us, and after

sitting a short time, each rose up in his turn, and, bowing low, placed his house at my disposal. This, I was well aware, was the Spanish method of conferring on a stranger the privileges of friendship; and I rose therefore in my turn, and expressed in suitable terms my gratitude for the honour done me. Furthermore to cement the friendship, I visited them that same evening—which indeed it was absolutely necessary I should do, according to the laws of Spanish etiquette—and submitted to the usual interrogatories that pass between confidential associates. My age, the number of my family, my religious belief, my wedded or unwedded state, and various other particulars, were all made the subject of inquiries, and freely commented upon by the good people, as if I had been some specimen of the animal kingdom just caught, and whose peculiar properties it behoved them to investigate and discuss: yet, withal, there was so much simplicity in their queries and discussions, that I could not help entering into the spirit of the thing, and was soon quite at home in acting the part of showman to myself. In the evening it was determined to have a dance. Some time previously a Portuguese dancing-master had found his way to the village, and since his ap-

pearance nothing was in fashion but quadrilles, mazurkas, and escocesas. Alas for the Fandangos, the Boleros, the Zapateadas, and other dances of the people! they had in consequence been voted ungenteel, and fit only for the corral, and the swarthy dancers who wind their arms to the lively rattle of the castanets. The assembly room, when we reached it, was lighted up, and filled with the dark-eyed belles of the village, to whose numbers, I regretted to see, those of the male sex bore no proportion. All exerted themselves, however, to do justice to their instructor—doing their steps, as it is called, with praiseworthy minuteness. Some treacherous memories, however, occasionally murdered “L’Eté” and “Trenise;” and as this invariably brought us to a stand-still, the doctor was appointed by acclamation fogleman: for the remainder of the evening his duty consisted in bawling out “Ladies’ chain,” “Advance and retire,” “Turn your partners,” and so forth. It was late before we parted, the concluding scene being a *pas de deux*, performed by my host’s young daughters.

Next morning, the guide whom I had engaged made his appearance; and, after swallowing a hasty breakfast, I prepared to depart—the pressing en-

treaties of my host and hostess notwithstanding, whose kindness appeared to increase with every moment of my stay. They were very desirous I should remain a few days longer, to witness a fair that was to be held in the neighbourhood; but I did not feel at liberty to trespass on their hospitality any longer, and with reiterated thanks, and under an express promise to renew my visit should I return to Seville, I bade them farewell. Out of the village our route led down one of those bridle paths so characteristic of the country. From the wearing effects of the constant passage of vehicles, added to the fury of the winter rains, the path in time sinks as it were into the soil, and becomes in truth a ditch just broad enough to permit the movement of a cart. Creeping shrubs hung from the walls of this singular road, and caught our hats and cloaks as we wound along without catching a glimpse of aught but the sky overhead. At length we descended to a plain that bore all the signs of industrious cultivation. Large fields of maize yet green, and of wheat ready for the sickle, spread away to the left; while beyond them rose the spires of Manzanilla, the town itself being hidden from view by dark olive-woods: on the right extended a wide common browsed on by

numerous herds of cattle. Altogether it was a prospect that might well make glad the heart of the owner, with its assurances of golden gains and of labour well rewarded; but it wanted the charm of variety, and the eye soon grew tired of meeting field after field of waving grain. My guide in the meantime was by no means disposed to let the hours pass in silence, and before we had traversed a league was enjoying a complete monopoly of the conversation. Juanito was above the middle height, of a spare and wiry frame, seldom smiled, and spoke and thought like a man who had seen something of the world. His adventures had been somewhat of a varied kind, and were more or less connected with the systematic infraction of his country's laws; but this did not lower him in the estimation of his friends or the public, and for myself I confess my feelings rather inclined to him for the same reasons: in a word, he either was or had been a contrabandista. One incident in his history is worth telling. On one occasion, when engaged with some confederates in a "smuggling lay" near Malaga, he had the misfortune to be captured by a Columbian cruiser, by which he and his fellow contrabandistas were carried to Gibraltar. Here they were

confined for some time in the hold of the vessel, closely watched, and with a very scanty allowance of food. To make matters worse, each day it became less and less, till at length it ceased altogether, and for three days they suffered all the agonies of hunger. In despair, a plan was concerted in order to reach the shore, and make known to the authorities the horrible privations they suffered. As they were allowed to ascend to the deck, but only four at a time, it was agreed that of those who could swim, that number should attempt to reach the shore. This was accordingly done. The little party suddenly throwing off their cloaks, plunged into the sea and made for the land; and in spite of the boats which were instantly sent in pursuit, contrived to reach it in safety. On the case being made known to the governor, orders were despatched to the Columbian vessel for the immediate liberation of the captives. "And thus, you see," concluded Juanito, "I am indebted to your countrymen for my liberty, and perhaps my life; for it was the intention of our captors to carry us to Columbia, though it is but too probable we should have perished by the way, from the barbarity of our treatment." His last expedition was undertaken in company with a

party of contrabandistas, who were summoned to aid, and if need be to defend by the strong hand, the unloading of a vessel which was despatched from Gibraltar with a rich cargo of tobacco. When assembled, their numbers, the reader will be surprised to learn, amounted to 250 men, all well armed with escopetas, many of them with two. Upon approaching the spot where the landing was to be effected, which was somewhere within the frontiers of Portugal, they were met by another band of 150 under a different command, and in conjunction proceeded to their destination. It may be conceived that the passage of so large a force of armed men through the country did not fail to alarm the Portuguese authorities, and a body of troops was despatched to disperse the daring party. Between these and the bold contrabandistas some skirmishing ensued, and one or two of the latter were wounded; but as the vessel they expected did not make her appearance, it was judged expedient to make no further resistance, and they accordingly separated without accomplishing their object. Each man had two horses, and received payment according to the sufficiency of his animals and the load they could carry: in general the agreement ranged from twelve to

thirty dollars, subject to the stipulation, that if no cargo was discharged, the half only should be claimed.

What government, we may well ask, can ever hope to put down smuggling, when its subjects unite in such formidable numbers to maintain the traffic? A strong executive, aided by a combination of favourable circumstances, and a lavish expenditure of treasure, might, perhaps, undertake the task with some show of success; but it almost excites a smile to see attempted by the feeble and corrupt hands of Spain, the suppression of a system against which far more powerful nations have contended in vain. When we witness the wide extent of her frontier, and know, moreover, that her officials are scantily remunerated, and consequently open to temptation, we do not wonder at everywhere seeing such articles as English cottons, thread, stockings, muslins, and the like, which are excluded from introduction by duties amounting to a prohibition. Gibraltar is the emporium from whence the contraband cargoes are supplied; thus being, in peace as in war, a thorn in the side of Spain. The amount of our exports to the "Rock" sufficiently proves this. In 1844, their value reached one million sterling, an amount which was

infinitely beyond the consumption of the 12,000 dwellers there; and which would certainly create surprise, did we not know that, either by connivance or open violence, three-fourths of it reached the interior. At the same time, it is curious to observe that our exports to Spain, officially declared, amounted to no more than 500,000*l.* in value. If we add to this a million and a half for what passes through Gibraltar, and by the frontiers of Portugal, upon the mules of the contrabandista, we shall form some notion of the real amount of our trade with the former country.

Our road led through two or three villages apparently crumbling into ruins. In these miserable spots, however, are frequently to be seen houses of a superior description, whose owners are gentlemen of property and men of refined education. The cause of their existence amid such desolation is, as I have already stated, to be found in the general insecurity of life and property which pervades Spain. No man thinks of making a country-house his abode, but chooses the village or hamlet nearest to his property, and from thence sallies forth to superintend the operations of his dependents. For the same reasons, farm-houses are

rare; master and servant inhabit the same pueblo, and often have to travel a weary league or two before reaching the farm.

In one of these villages, not far from Escasena, my attention was struck by a mansion which might once have claimed to be the pride of the place; but now, roofless and dismantled, its only distinction was to elevate its mouldering walls a little higher than its fellows in decay. The basement story, I found, was converted into a yard for cattle; and from that a staircase of beautiful white marble, though now sadly fractured and mutilated, led to the upper rooms. The history attached to it was an everyday one: the founder had returned from Mexico laden with wealth, which purchased for him the title of marquis, and reared this edifice with its marble columns and costly decorations. His inheritor speedily dissipated the gains, probably ill-gotten, of his parent; and the third in succession now resides at La Isla in indigence and obscurity. His necessities had been such as to cause him to sell the very roof and flooring of this his paternal dwelling for the sake of the sum the wood might bring.

From a long way off the towers of Niebla had

been visible, but at the slow pace of our steeds the distance between us seemed never to diminish. At length we reached the banks of the Rio Tinto; its dark waters, gushing over a rocky channel, conveyed an idea of refreshing coolness, in delightful contrast with the oppressive heat that loaded the atmosphere. Following the windings of the river for a short distance, we came to a spot where it was crossed by an ancient bridge of nine arches. Beyond this, to the left, rose the sunburnt and crumbling walls of the town, crowning a slight eminence, at whose base still wound the river we had passed; while nearer the bridge the higher battlements of the castle overlooked and commanded the passage across. The road between the bridge and the town seemed to have been the work of the elements and time, rather than of the hand of man. We toiled up a steep path, paved by the rock which the winter torrents had laid bare, and fringed on either side by oleander bushes, whose rich bright blossoms were a welcome sight to eyes that ached from the glare and reflection of the sun upon dusty paths. Huge masses of rock intercepted our progress at every step, and covered the declivity beside and below us; others had held their

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downward way to the bed of the stream, where their site was marked by the foam that broke over them.

On coming abreast of the walls of the town, Juanito turned off and led the way to a posada just fronting the gate, where he proposed halting for our midday repast. The aspect of this place of entertainment for man and beast was anything but cheering to a way-worn traveller. Stretched on their mantas about the entrance lay half-a-dozen muleteers, enjoying their siesta during the heat of the day. No one concerned himself in the least degree about us, nor indeed did an eye uncloze, though the clatter of our steeds as we led them over the flinty pavement of the dwelling might have been heard in the farthest corner; and I was looking in vain for the master of the establishment among the recumbent forms around me, when my attendant, who was better versed in the ways of the place, walked up to a very stout woman reclining sleepily on one of the low chairs of the country, and inquired if they had any barley for his animal. A shake of the head intimated there was none, and spared our hostess, for such she was, the trouble of opening her lips. To have inquired for provisions of any

description would only have elicited a stare of astonishment at our want of forethought, and we therefore sat down to the scanty store we had brought along with us. Our repast did not detain us long; and not being in the mood to abide longer than was needful in this mansion of Morpheus, I sallied forth, accompanied by Juanito, for a ramble through the town.

Entering by the gate on the eastern side, under an archway of Moorish architecture, we passed at once into the midst of ruins and desolation. It was a melancholy sight to witness, and I involuntarily turned to a crumbling staircase that conducted to the summit of the walls, thinking that I might descry some quarter from which the life had not departed so utterly as it had from this scene of solitude and decay. Still it was everywhere the same; there were whole streets of houses of which nothing but the walls remained standing, and which now resembled long rows of skeletons clinging together for support; the whole seemed ready to sink into the ground before the first blast that swept over the fortifications to touch with its wing the long grass that grew upon hundreds of hearthstones and thresholds.

Had all this been wrought by the elements, or by war, or any one of those catastrophes that suddenly overthrow the work of years, one could have looked upon it with pity and regret, yet not without hopes of returning prosperity; but a worse agent than these had made the town the wreck it was, and more fatally assailed its future prospects. Its ruin was the fruit of that national decay, the traces of which cross the observer's path wherever he wanders. Living Spain is no more; her industry and energy are but the languid efforts of old age; her vitality circulates feebly through a frame which once revelled deep in avarice, injustice, ignorance, and superstition, and for the sake of these stretched itself under the blighting shadow of misgovernment and corruption: she drags on her existence painfully and laboriously; and as the extremities are the first to grow torpid, so has this remote town been the first to share in her failing strength, and exhibit the earliest tokens of dissolution.

Meanwhile, I clambered along the battlements: sometimes slipping among the long grass that waved over them, or stepping cautiously on tottering towers that had erst borne unmoved the tread of

the Moorish sentinel, I came to an angle that commanded a fine view of the valley through which the river wound towards the sea. A little further on, a yawning breach opposed my advance; and I descended to *terra firma*, where the view was confined to wretched cabins harbouring a population of dark-skinned women and half-naked children. The town, like Palos and Moguer, is said to be peopled by the descendants of the slaves, whom the conquerors of the New World brought back with them as the spoils of the sword; and certainly the present inhabitants resemble Mulattoes much more than Europeans: but in the want of positive evidence for this fact, it is just as likely that their darker hue arises from a stronger infusion than usual of Moorish blood. Of the few we met, one was a little urchin of five or six years, who, divested of everything but nature's garb—*en cuero* as they call it in Spain—came sauntering down the street with the air of a Bond-street loungeur. He paused when his eye caught us, and, folding his little arms, turned round and honoured me with a stare that would have done credit to an exquisite. I presume his survey was satisfactory, for, nodding his little head in approval, he marched on and left us.

On the way to the town, and while wandering through its silent streets, Juanito, in proof of the ancient riches of the place, had more than once launched out into glowing descriptions of treasures of gold, and I know not what else, that had lately been dug up within the walls. Tales of this kind are so frequent in the mouths of the vulgar in Spain, that I seldom paid any attention to them; but I know not what whim induced me now to consider his account as highly probable. The thought struck me just as I stood before a dwelling that bore evident traces of having been a portion of the ancient fortifications; and, as a beginning must be made somewhere, What place, thought I, so likely as this, to know something of the buried wealth of its former masters? The "Dios guarde à usted" of Juanito was responded to by the customary "Pase usted adelante." Crossing the threshold, I found myself under a kind of dome, into which the light was admitted by an aperture in the top; the only inmate was a woman, who desisted from spinning while she replied to my inquiries. I was directed to go to the house of "Antonio el coxo," the way to which she described with a minuteness that left me quite bewildered on her concluding; but, luckily,

Juanito was more acute, and without much difficulty piloted the way to the mansion of "Antonio the cripple." "Quien es?" was the answer to the knock of Juanito, who by this time was full of enthusiasm for the cause of antiquarian research, and thundered at the door as if it was a matter of life and death that brought us there. "Gente de paz" (people of peace), we rejoined; and thus reassured, a wicket in the door was opened—or, more accurately, just enough of it to permit the swarthy spouse of Antonio to reconnoitre the persons whose impatient summons had nearly demolished the frail bolts.

The information we received was very unsatisfactory; the lord of the house was absent on a journey, and, moreover, had bestowed his treasures upon a friend in Moguer. As a last hope, I inquired if any other virtuoso was to be found in the place; and, considering for a moment, our dark friend replied that most probably the cura might possess some ancient coins and other relics of the past. To the habitation of the cura I therefore wended my way, and halted before a dwelling whose exterior wore a more respectable air than any I had hitherto seen. The doors were closed, betokening that its

inmates had not yet shaken off their siesta: my watch, however, told me that, by the customs of the land, the drowsy god should have abdicated half-an-hour before; and curas, I thought, should not set an example of sloth to their flocks. So these reasons directed my hand to the knocker; and, the servant being informed as to the purport of my visit, I was ushered into the *antesala*. In a few moments the cura made his appearance, and in reply to my question related, that some peasants, while working in a field belonging to him, had discovered, close to the river's edge, a large jar: upon breaking open this, there was displayed to view a multitude of Moorish coins, the whole of which were silver. The quantity was calculated to exceed in weight an *arroba*, or measure of twenty-five pounds. As almost invariably happens, the finders were unable to part the booty in peace, so that the circumstance became known to the authorities, who claimed the whole; and as the land in which it was found was his property, he became entitled to a portion, which he received. Of these he showed me a few, and very frankly presented me with one. It was of the usual shape of Moorish coins, being square, and stamped with Arabic characters, and in a state of

perfect preservation. With many thanks I bade adieu to the kind and courteous cura—who, like almost all those of his profession I subsequently encountered, was a gentleman in his bearing and manners—and in a few moments was on the road to Moguer.

Winding round the northern side of the fortifications by a rocky path, I descended into the valley of the Rio Tinto, and followed the course of the “dark river,” for such its name imports, amid rich fields of wheat and barley: intermingled with these were green and luxuriant vineyards, while villages and spires upon the slopes gave life and animation to the scenery. Half a league beyond Lucena, we turned up the acclivity on our right to reach a convent, whose towers, and tall cypresses rising on its brow, form a conspicuous object to wayfarers in the hollow of the valley. The conventual buildings I found undergoing a metamorphosis little imagined by the pious founder: workmen were busily engaged in converting them into a country mansion; and on all sides cells and oratories were shaking off their monkish repose, and waking to the noise of the implements by which they were transformed into bedrooms and salas. To my regret I learnt that

the proprietor and his lady had taken their departure eight days previously; but I received a cordial welcome from the superintendent of the works, to whom I was recommended by a letter from the señora. In other days, Padre Alonzo, as he was still called, had ruled the temporal affairs of the brotherhood of which he was a member; he had, however, lived to see his brethren expelled from their home, their possessions confiscated, and the scanty pittance accorded them as an equivalent cruelly withheld, by a government that broke its faith as soon as plighted, and cared as little for their want and wretchedness as it did for its own credit and honour. Let me not, however, be understood as wishing to bespeak sympathy for monastic institutions: here, as everywhere else, their existence was the bane of the country; and so generally admitted was this by Spaniards of all shades of opinion, that had Don Carlos ascended the throne of Spain, the most strenuous resistance to their restoration, would have been offered by his own followers, to whom, with the exception of the priestly advisers, they were as odious as to the Liberal party.

From the great size of the convent, it must have been the property of a numerous as well as wealthy

community. There were three cloisters, all communicating with each other: the first into which the padre conducted me was small, but the next was spacious and well designed. In one chamber was piled a confused heap of ponderous tomes, part of the library of the brotherhood, and evidently regarded as useless lumber, which it would be a charity to take away. Apparently the worthy padre bore no great love to them, for he pressed me to consider as mine sundry volumes I was inspecting with much interest: they were ancient editions of the Fathers, and would have been a treasure to a bibliomaniac; but black letter and vellum, though invested in my eyes with the veneration that belongs to antiquity, did not inspire me with the enthusiasm required to transport them over hill and dale for the next three or four months, and accordingly I civilly declined the padre's generous offer of his master's property. One volume, however, I possess, and it is one which, as a memorial of those whom I may never see again, I preserve with religious care. On my way to England, while the steamer was pausing for its despatches in the Bay of Cadiz, I received from the señora a Latin Bible, which she rightly judged would be more welcome

to a Protestant than the rarest work of ancient lore in the convent library. The moth and worm had been busy with its pages, and on the last one some hand had borne record that its teachings had been in vain against the canker of disappointed hopes. Even in the cell there was the spirit which could write—

Ya es la esperanza perdida
Y un solo bien me consuela
Que el tiempo que pasa y vuela
Llevará presto la vida.

As I passed through the convent gates, it would have been strange had I not wished that sorrow might never enter there: I had received too much kindness from its new masters to think of anything else at that moment. The history of the lady was, besides, peculiarly interesting. The daughter and co-heiress of a wealthy planter of the Havanna, in her early years she received the usual amount of instruction accorded to females there, and which was of a kind corresponding to the life of indolence and frivolity she was expected to lead. This, however, did not suit the tastes of Manuela G——, in whose mind the love of knowledge was deeply implanted. In the literature of her mother tongue there was little to slake her thirst for information, and she

turned therefore to acquire the languages of Europe, and especially the English, as a key to that knowledge her own country could not afford. Difficulties and discouragements did not repress her spirit, manifold as these were under the planter's roof, where prejudices abound, and where the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was considered a gratuitous folly; at length, by toilsome exertions she became a self-taught mistress of English, which she spoke with a purity and elegance I have seldom heard equalled.

In point of solid acquirements her progress was proportionably great; even in England, whose boast is in the number of her well-read and intellectual women, her place would have been a high one. From the Havanna she repaired to Cadiz, having previously married the husband of her choice, an officer in the Spanish navy, and who to his ancient lineage added the frankness and openness of disposition that everywhere seems part of a sailor's nature. Her children were in England, receiving their education at a Protestant school; a step she had taken not without grave remonstrances from her friends, to whose minds, moulded in the spirit of modern liberality in Spain, the possession

of no faith at all was far more pardonable than a leaning towards one adverse to the national creed. But her strong good sense taught her to think otherwise, even if there had been no reason to believe that in this matter she acted in accordance with convictions which were not exactly those of her forefathers. Such characters are rare anywhere, but in Spain they "dwell apart like stars."

The bells of Moguer were tolling the *animas* when we entered the town, after an hour spent in winding amid vineyards intermingled with fields of yellow wheat, and the remains of pine-woods, where were blooming a vast variety of flowers. Juanito led the way with confidence to the inn, where I deposited my valuables in the "*seguro*," and thence proceeded to present my letters of introduction.

CHAPTER VII.

MOGUER—THE PINZONS—PALOS—THE CONVENT OF LA RABIDA
—ITS RUINOUS STATE—PICNIC THERE—ESCAPE OF PRISONERS
—RIDE TO ZALAMEA—VALVERDE—COSTUME OF THE INHABITANTS—HOLIDAY IN ZALAMEA—RIO TINTO—ITS MINES OF COPPER—THE ANCIENT BETHOA—CAMPO FRIO—THE TRAVELLED INNKEEPER.

THE first house to which I directed my steps was that of the Pinzons, the lineal descendants of Martin Alonzo Pinzon, the hardy mariner who was the first of his class to imbibe some of the enthusiasm of genius, and himself shared in the dangers that attended the search for an unknown world. In introducing this family to the reader, I trust I shall not be considered as violating the privacy of domestic life. As a general rule, there is no extenuation for those who heedlessly drag into their pages such individuals as they may meet with in the sacred boundary of the family circle; but something may be urged for the unwillingness of the world

to lose sight of those who bear a name with which history is familiar: the children of those whom it has elevated to a niche in the temple of fame are in some measure its own, and by virtue of this tie must it claim an interest in their welfare, as well as the right to learn something of their fortunes. At all events, if I err, I do so in company with the amiable author of the *Chronicles of the Alhambra*. It was under the roof of the Piazons that I first read the narrative of his acquaintance with their family, and his sketch of its respective members, by whom, I may add, it was referred to with feelings of gratification and pride.

The member of the family to whom I bore an introduction was absent on a sporting expedition, from which he was expected to return that night: his mother, however, placed the house at my disposal, but I only begged the address of some casa de pupilos; and being fully instructed on this point, took my leave, with the promise to pay a formal visit on the morrow. Assisted by a mozo from the inn, I found the house; and climbing a narrow and tortuous staircase, made my way into an apartment that served as a kitchen, hall, and passage to other chambers. In this was seated the mistress, whose

reception of my proposal to quarter myself under her roof amounted to a positive refusal, but after some expostulation I wrung an unwilling permission to remain. A mattress was dragged into a room whose musty smell and cobwebbed appearance bespoke the length of time it had been out of use; a couple of chairs were backed against the damp walls, and my habitation for the night was prepared. Comfortless as it was, I had expected something worse; and in this state of agreeable disappointment, betook myself to my couch, quite satisfied that a ride of ten hours would speedily drown in slumber every feeling of discomfort.

The next morning, while at breakfast, a young man of engaging exterior walked in, and announced himself as Don Ignacio Hernan de Pinzon. Many words had not passed between us before we had arranged a plan of operations for the day: the first part was to be dedicated to the contemplation of all the lions in the place; and the second part to commence with dinner at his mother's, from whom he was the bearer of an invitation to that effect.

Moguer is situated on the brow of a ridge that bounds on the south the valley of the Rio Tinto,

or Aciger; and may be described as an assemblage of a few long streets diverging from a common centre, rather than a compactly built town. With the exception of the principal church, which contains some ancient marble tombstones, upon which repose the sculptured effigies of knights in armour, and a tower built in imitation of the Giralda of Seville, there is little to attract a traveller's eye. Our survey of its public edifices was therefore speedily concluded, and to while away the time we entered the bodega, or wine storehouse, of a large proprietor, who, besides his possessions in vineyards, was one of the pillars of the church in Moguer. As I had seen the principal establishments of a similar kind in Port St. Mary's and Xeres, I was prepared to see nothing superior in this one, large and well filled as it would have been deemed by a stranger to the town. There was the usual display of portly butts, bearing on their shoulders, like so many Atlases, comrades as bulky as themselves; in corners men were drawing off from casks of fiery Catalan brandy the due proportion of alcohol, by means of which the pure juice of the grape is converted into that compound known to English palates as a full-bodied wine.

I confess, however, my surprise was great when the obliging padre, after introducing me to sundry casks of meaner note, inquired if I would like to taste St. Peter or St. Paul. In total darkness as to his meaning, I replied at random, "St. Paul;" and then made the discovery, that upon several of the largest tuns the padre had conferred the names of his favourite saints, which were legibly painted thereon. It was an odd way of evincing veneration for a saint, but no more strange than the custom once prevalent in Spain when she possessed a navy, of christening her vessels of war—the ministers of devastation and bloodshed—with the titles of San José and Santissima Trinidad. About 3000 or 4000 butts of the wine from this district are annually shipped to Xeres, where they are consumed in the manufacture of sherry. It is principally in the composition of the inferior kinds they are used, and the flavour peculiar to the Moguer wine is very readily detected in the low-priced sherries that abound in the English market.

At dinner I met the whole family of the Pinzons, consisting of the senora, her daughter, two sons, Ignacio and Isidoro (the latter in the priesthood), and a son by a former marriage; these are all that

survive ; and as yet no member has been tempted by the chase of fortune to forsake the roof under which they live in harmony and brotherhood. In the evening we strolled along the brow of the valley, and looked down upon the scene that lay below. Here, when about to be lost in the sea, the Rio Tinto winds through an extensive flat, that on the opposite side rises into a gently swelling declivity. To the left was Huelva, built on the extremity of a ridge running parallel with the valley ; below, almost at our feet, San Juan del Puerto ; and more distant to the right, Trigueras. Retracing our steps homewards, a violent thunderstorm broke over our heads, and compelled us to take shelter in the nearest cottage, the sole inhabitants of which were an aged female and her daughter, a woman of middle age. As the loudest peal shook the cabin, it was followed by a shriek from the latter, who fell from her seat and rolled in convulsions on the floor. In a short time, however, the fit passed away ; but it was striking to hear the terms of affection and endearment lavished upon the unconscious daughter by her affrighted mother.

“ Joy of my heart,” she exclaimed, “ will you not speak to me ? Oh, daughter of my soul, one

word! *Hija de mi alma*, I'm your mother, your mother."

In listening to these phrases, so Oriental in their character, we recognise how deeply the spirit of the East is seated in the nature of Spain: in phraseology, costume, manners, it is readily traced; and above all is it observable in that repugnance to change, so eminently the feature of nations that dwell near the rising sun. One might almost imagine that some secret link binds the fate and fortunes of Spain to those of the East. When the Ottoman Empire was thundering at the gates of Vienna, Western Europe was overshadowed by the might of Spain with the Indies. Both were then at the climax of their greatness, and both with equal steps approaching to the brink of that decay which since then has swallowed them up. And now, when the East is beginning to awake from the sleep of centuries, and to enter upon a new political existence, there are symptoms of a like movement in this land, so long in darkness. Separated by distance and position, the two are stirring feebly, as if it were by the same summons, and their steps are equally devious and uncertain; both have wandered into revolutions and bloodshed, and still evince a desire

to tread that ensanguined path; and upon each has descended the sword with such a sweep, that it were hard to tell whether their past torpidity were not better than the exhaustion that has followed its stroke.

At an early hour next morning we were astir, in order to escape the heat of the sun, which during the middle of the day had now become oppressive; a long ride was before us, and our destination was Palos and the convent of La Rabida, names that play an important part in the struggling fortunes of Columbus. Accompanied by a gentleman who was an inmate of the same casa de pupilos, and by Don Ignacio, I set forth on the back of a white steed of ancient aspect: the saddle was made in imitation of an English turn-out, but furnished with stirrup-irons of dimensions so minute, that if more than the point of the toe was inserted therein, the boot was caught as if in a trap, and required to be disengaged by the hand. Don Ignacio bestrode his own Andalucian; the high peaks of his albarde were lost in a multitude of cloaks and mantas, in readiness for whatever storm might overtake us. The way to Palos lay through a country of varied though not striking beauty, relieved by occasional glimpses of the sea.

One long street alone gave that place a claim to the title of town, or rather village; but such as it was, it lay snugly at the foot of a conical eminence, on whose summit rose the remains of ancient fortifications. Turning down a side street of two or three houses, we stopped before the door of one which is said to have been the habitation of Martin Alonzo, and is still occupied by a relative of the family. There was nothing to mark it, either without or within, as superior to the others; it was nothing more than the abode of a wine-grower, furnished with its due compliment of bodegas, wine-presses, and tinajas, together with its distilling and boiling apparatus.

The inhabitants of this town, like those of Nicbla, are said to be descended from slaves introduced by the adventurous mariners who resided here before removing to Moguer and other towns. Xeres de los Caballeros, a town of Estremadura, is also said to have been peopled by them; and there may be some foundation for this in the fact that Pizarro and Cortes, and the majority of their followers, were natives of that province. At all events, whatever be their origin, it is undeniable that a marked difference distinguishes the personal appearance of

the inhabitants of Palos from that of their brother Andalusians. Their complexion is not swarthy, but partakes rather of a copper colour; the cast of their features is square and angular, and the hair crisp and coarse. Having taken the names of their masters, there are thus to be found here the noblest surnames in Spain, borne by a population which is little removed above want.

The convent of the Rabida is little more than half a league from the town: from a hacienda, or property belonging to my companion's family, could be descried its belfry, rising above the pines that cluster round and hide from view the main building. A more sequestered spot could scarcely be chosen, or one where the world could be sooner forgotten. In full view of the sea, it crowned the extremity of a ridge that pointed towards the west; and when regarded by the seaman from his passing bark, must rise conspicuously among the surrounding objects in the landscape. Whether by accident or design, everything was in keeping with its Arab name of Rabida, or the wilderness; pine-woods and wild shrubs closed in around the high walls; the paths that approached them were broken and rugged, and seemed to come from scenes of wilder desolation;

every vestige of cultivation was excluded, as if it were feared that the sight of man's handiwork might recall the world to bosoms which had abjured its ties. If there was any prospect open to the eye, it was that which showed the sea, and their fellow-men tempting its treacherous surface. The general aspect of the convent is that of an assemblage of high walls associated together without much regard to regularity or the rules of architecture. But the porch was an object of deeper interest than if it had been framed of the noblest proportions. Beneath its humble arch rested the discoverer of the New World, when, weary and way-worn, he begged a cup of water at the door. The conversation that ensued brought out the sympathies of a heart which was alive to the noble enthusiasm of genius; and when it ended, he must have felt that now, if ever, his star was ascending. What rising hopes must have smoothed his brow as he departed! and how light must have been his step beneath the gloomy pines that seemed to frown him away as he approached the door!

Passing forward, a cloister is entered, in which an inscription bears witness that it was repaired and restored in 1804; a vain memorial, for since the

expulsion of the monks, and the confiscation of their convent by the government, there are no traces here but those of neglect and pillage. It was a scene of sordid destruction. Since the government had taken no care of it, the whole neighbourhood had assumed the right to remove and abstract whatever might repay their trouble; the very roofs were torn down, and the floors gone, for the sake of the beams that supported the tiles; and even without that excuse the hand of wanton dilapidation was everywhere visible. On the right hand of the patio, facing the entrance, lies the way to the chapel, which is an edifice of modern construction. The choir was destroyed, and a marble slab at the foot of the altar had been torn up by sacrilegious hands in the hope of finding treasure hidden beneath. Their act disclosed a vault, in which, probably, reposed the dust of the pious founder, before it was scattered by unhallowed curiosity, for on descending into it, and groping about, we laid our hands upon the mouldering fragments of a coffin. From the chapel we made our way into another cloister, and ascending a staircase, dangerous from the damage it had received, gained the corridors into which opened the cells of the monks. Among them

is shown one in which Columbus is said to have slept during his visits to the convent. If the tradition be true, then had the fathers consulted well the feelings of the wanderer.

Its windows look out upon the ocean—that wide ocean so full of mystery and dread to the common minds that understood him not, and a trackless waste to the contented knowledge of his day, but across which the daring eye of his genius beheld a path as straight and bright as that cast upon the waves by the sun sinking in the west. This must have been his chamber; and tradition must be right in appropriating the next one to his faithful and influential friend, Fray Juan Perez de Marchena. The floors of this, as well as of many cells adjoining, had vanished before the Vandalism of which we saw so many traces. Yet the perpetrators of it were only acquitting themselves as true Spaniards; they could be no legitimate descendants of the men who repaid Columbus with black ingratitude, and sent him to the grave in sorrow, if they did not now deface a spot his name had made memorable. The eyes of my companion filled with tears as he witnessed the scene of havoc. His interest in the place was deeper and nearer than mine; his ancestor

had been the comrade of Columbus; and, justly proud of that connexion, he felt all the more keenly the worse than slighting disregard his countrymen rendered to a place which was a striking page in the history of their great benefactor.

We mounted up to the belfry, and sitting down on the ridge of the roof, found a relief in looking upon the varied scenery the prospect embraced. Facing us, to the west, was the sea; on the left, all was shadowed by pine-woods and low copse; in the other direction, across the estuary of the Rio Tinto, the town of Huelva, covering the lower half of a declivity; and up the valley, the river winding its course amid fields of golden grain. The day, besides, was bright and fine, with a gentle air from the west; and having worked ourselves up into a passion down below, we were in a fit state to imbibe something of the spirit that western breeze had caught from the calm sea over which it floated towards us. By little and little we yielded to the feelings it inspired; and then, while surrounded by this peaceful scene, and canopied by a heaven of purest blue, it was passing pleasant to look upon river and sea, and forest and flower, basking in the

sunshine, and enjoying, as it seemed, with quiet gladness the genial light of day.

Close to the convent, on the west, is a creek, called El Estero del Domingo Rubio. Tradition marks this as the final point of departure of Columbus's little squadron for an unknown world. This moment in his troubled career—the close of long years spent in patient yet courageous hope—one battle painfully won, and another lowering before him—a contest in which he beheld the elements ranged against him, along with men more intractable than they—this moment, so full of new hopes and fears, has been seized by not a few of our painters as a fit subject for the canvass, but without, as I thought, having rendered it sufficient justice; so I proceeded to sketch a parting scene for myself. I anchored the trio of adventurous barks in the creek, and gave them a fair wind, for on their quaint high poops the scarlet-and-gold banner of Spain is fluttering seawards, and impatiently pointing the way to lands through which it is to be borne in triumph. The topsails are loosened, and the last preparations for departure complete; but the decks are deserted by the crew—they are in the chapel of the convent,

listening with emotions that stir each heart as it never felt before, to the last mass they shall perhaps hear celebrated on Christian ground. And now the concluding chaunt is over, and a procession of monks issues from the gates, and, bearing the host under a canopy, winds down to the ships, followed by the mariners and a crowd of weeping relatives. The crew ascend the sides of their vessels, and, leaning over the bulwarks, exchange silent adieus with the throng that lines the shore, who in their part mingle vows to our Lady of the Rabida with prayers for their safe return. One alone is wanting to complete their numbers; it is a man short of stature and of slender proportions, whose lofty brow and dark thoughtful eye, together with the bronze of his complexion, give an expression of determination to his small and delicate features. It is Columbus, who has lingered behind to press once more the hand of the monk in whom, amid all difficulties, he found a true and constant friend. They part at length; the commander issues his orders, the sails are swung round to meet the wind, and the expedition is begun.

Descending from our lofty perch, we again surveyed the cell of Columbus, and, scrambling by the

broken staircase of which I have made mention down to the basement story, were surprised to hear voices and loud laughter in the chapel, where lately all was silence. Peeping in, we discovered that the merriment proceeded from a party of young folks of both sexes, who had come across from Huelva to spend the day here. They had brought provisions with them, and were dispersed about the chapel, devouring their repast; some seated on the steps of the altar, others on their folded mantas, but the greater number on the masses of broken pavement or demolished partitions with which the floor was strewn. A picnic in the sanctuary of superstition! Can this be the soil of monkish, priest-ridden Spain, the land of the Inquisition, with its dungeons of torture and quemaderos—where kings went in solemn pomp to witness the wholesale burning of their subjects, and bore stern rebukes from pitiless inquisitors when they exhibited signs of compassion for the hapless victims? It is even the same land, but the mighty are fallen. They are outcasts and wanderers, and the citadels of their bigotry dismantled or converted to profane uses. Some are now colleges and museums; others, manufactories, barracks, hospitals, or prisons. In Seville, the

place of execution is upon the wall of a convent; and I have seen strolling Thespians set up their stage in the hall of another. Verily the land is changed!

A short time sufficed to bring us to the hacienda of the family at Palos, where we found dinner waiting, and returned by nightfall to Moguer.

A few days after this excursion, the whole town was in an uproar. Seven prisoners confined in the "carcel" had, by means of files furnished them by accomplices, succeeded in cutting through an iron grating which admitted light into their dungeon. The aperture through which they escaped was about the size of an ordinary octavo volume; and it appeared incredible that men could have forced themselves through an opening which it would have been difficult for a child to have passed through. The wise ones shook their heads on seeing this, and regarded it as a blind to divert inquiry from the real mode of escape, which was probably effected through the door, the guardian thereof being moved by sundry considerations to open it for their behoof. However, there was a great show of zeal for their recapture; horsemen were starting off at full speed, and escopetas loaded

to shoot them in the event of resistance. This would unquestionably have been the fate of two condemned to the gallows, had they been overtaken by their pursuers, whose instructions were to inflict on them summary vengeance, whether they resisted or not. Such off-hand justice is by no means unfrequent in this country, and is a good deal patronised by the authorities, whom it saves a world of trouble, not to mention the miserable ration of horse-beans served out to each prisoner. The criminals, however, were spared the fate intended for them on this occasion, for the party in search returned next morning without having captured one, and without intelligence of any kind, except the surmise that they had fled northwards. This was the route I was about to take, and my friends in Moguer joined in considering it, since the escape of these prisoners, as highly unsafe; and more than one pressed me to defer my departure till further information was obtained of their movements, or at all events to reach my destination by some circuitous course. Good manners forbade me to smile at their apprehensions; but besides the utter unlikelihood of a few unarmed, half-starved fugitives assailing an armed traveller, my past ex-

perience had shown me how generally unfounded such representations were; and had I lent them a credulous ear on landing in Spain, my travels might have ended in the first town I entered. Generally speaking, there are two states of mind into which the mention of the word "road" throws the Andalucian: he either becomes highly imaginative, or supremely credulous; and it would be well for the traveller, as an universal rule, to receive with distrust the statements which under such circumstances he is certain of hearing. Nothing however, could dissuade Don Ignacio from bearing me company for part of the way: his motive for this step I suspected to originate in his fear lest harm should befall me ere I passed the dangerous localities near the town; and as I entertained no misgivings on that score, I was the more urgent in my entreaties that he should spare himself so much unnecessary trouble: but all in vain, his determination was not to be shaken.

It came to pass, therefore, that at an early hour of the morning I was on the road to Zalamea la Real, accompanied by my friend and Don Francisco F——, a gentleman who was going on business to

Weas, a village about half way to the former town. Zalamea was the first stage, on a route which would lead me through the mountainous tract of which the western portion of Andalusia is composed, and, by the bridle roads with which it abounds, bring me to Cordova without approaching the usual highway to that city. It was a journey not to be made without fatigue and some privations, but these I was prepared to encounter in expectation of being fully repaid by some glimpses of the wild scenery I could not but meet, and some further acquaintance with a people who, living "remote from human ken," were invested with all the attraction that belongs to those whose ways are the antipodes of our own.

Our road lay up the valley of the Rio Tinto, between abundant crops of wheat and garbanzos, part of which were already reaped and laid upon the threshing floor. This operation is similar to that noticed by travellers in the East, and consists in forming a circular area of beaten earth upon some spot exposed to the winds; the floor is then littered with the sheaves, and a number of horses, mules, or asses, being driven round the circle under

the control of a man or boy, by the treading of their hooves the grain is separated from the stalks, and afterwards winnowed.

My new companion I had met before in Moguer, and my knowledge of his history made me regard him with curious eyes. He was a short square-built man, who sat firmly on his saddle notwithstanding the curvettings of his sleek Andalucian, and the want of stirrups, which he probably disdained. His general bearing, as well as the expression of his restless eye, marked him as a man to elbow his way through the world, careless of whatever rebuffs or rude collisions he might sustain. Such in fact was his history, and it was not difficult to bring him to talk of his past career.

“ You have heard, Señor, of Aguado, the famous Spanish banker of Paris. Well, he and I commenced the world together, with little enough, I assure you. It was during the War of Independence, and we became contractors to the French army here; and many a weary day have we passed together in following the droves of cattle we collected for their use. At length the French were driven out, and Aguado accompanied them to their own land, where he is now a great man; while I, you see, am still

toiling to fill the puchero. Ah, Senor! he possessed the education I am without, and but for that I might have been a millionaire like him. Me darabia to think of it," and thereupon Don Francisco drove his spurs into his animal's sides, causing it to plunge like a wild colt. In truth, his education amounted to a slight knowledge of reading, and the power of forming certain hieroglyphics which passed as his signature; but, these disadvantages notwithstanding, the natural energy and ability of the man had raised him to the position of a wealthy proprietor in his own town. He was the master of lands and vineyards, and a shipper of wines to England. The deficiencies of his education, however, were evidently a sore subject with him, for he resorted to the disadvantages they entailed more than once. "At all events," he continued, "my son shall never feel what I have experienced; I have sent him to England, where he is getting the best education money can procure for him."

An hour's ride brought us to Veas, having previously crossed the river by a ford. Nothing could be more monotonous than the country through which we slowly advanced towards this village. On every side were broad fields of wheat, relieved only

by plantations of the sad-coloured olive, and here and there tracts of matas, or waste lands thickly clothed with shrubs, amid which a few sheep or goats struggled for a scanty subsistence. A far more agreeable prospect to the eye was presented by the steep slopes of the valley up which our route lay; vineyards clung to these, and among them wound many footpaths, leading to hamlets whose spires were just topping the summit of the ridges. Here Don Francisco parted with us; but Don Ignacio, who originally intended to ride no further, changed his mind, and decided upon bearing me company to Zalamea. Without delay, therefore, we continued our progress; for to make a journey of nine leagues in a day, through so rugged a country as that which rose before us, demanded every moment of time, in order to obtain shelter before night-fall. A few miles beyond this ruinous village we began to feel the influence of the sierra; and exchanged the continuous flat we had been traversing for a gentle ascent, that at every step of our progress revealed something new; and for the tedious sameness, of which our eyes were weary, we had only to look back to enjoy a series of changing and beautiful views. Upon the summit of the first ridge we

paused to survey the prospect that spread out far to the eye. Immediately before us we looked down upon a rapid descent, that sank into a narrow vale, the opposite side of which we must perforce climb by as steep and tortuous a path as that which conducted to the bottom. To the left, this valley opened into a wide tract of undulating surface, affording partial glimpses of the crops and woods that filled the hollow places; while far beyond rose the blue summits of the Sierra of Aracena, a cloud of vapour hovering above each peak, and following the outlines of its ranges. On the right might be seen in the dim horizon the Sierra de Berrocal, with the same snowy veil floating over, but never touching the mountain mass, and seeming like a phantom host holding its watch upon the frontiers of some world beyond.

A march in these wilds is little else than a succession of ascents and descents, and these of a break-neck description. Roads, in the usual meaning of the term, there are none; and the bridle-paths that supply their place, with a noble contempt for convenience or expedition, follow every inequality of the surface, generally descend the mountain sides where they are steepest, and cross the torrents where

the passage is most difficult. Frequently, when I was the first to reach the crossing place, I have looked upwards at the string of mules following in single file, and speculated upon the mischief the fall of a single animal might cause: in that case, from the rapidity of the descent, and the impetus of its fall, it must have sent the whole of the foremost files rolling to the bottom.

Upon reaching the crest of a ridge by the usual toilsome process, we unexpectedly beheld in the succeeding hollow the tiled roofs of Valverde. The appearance of this mountain village was very unlike the invariable aspect of Andalucian pueblos. With very few exceptions, the exterior of the houses remained untouched by the whitewashing mania so prevalent in Spain, and they stood, therefore, in the native colour of the dark red stone of which they were constructed; this, together with the hue of their roofs, made it seem as if a conflagration had lately swept through the streets, and given to the whole the dull and calcined aspect they now wore. While our mozo was tending our horses in the inn, Don Ignacio and I strolled through the village. On each side we found sombre dwellings, remarkable only for their gloom and homeliness: from

these we turned with more satisfaction to examine the costume of their feminine inmates, which was sufficiently singular.

A dark blue petticoat reaches a little way below the knee, showing off to advantage a neatly turned leg and ankle, which is incased in a stocking of the same colour, ornamented with white cloaks. The shoes are of the unblackened leather commonly worn by the peasantry in this part of Andalusia. In place of the mantilla, a black shawl covers the head, the top of which is often surmounted by a Quaker-like hat. The women of Valverde enjoy the reputation of being pretty, and their appearance did not belie report. Their complexions are generally fair,—a style of beauty highly prized in Andalusia: when to this are added chestnut locks and a blooming cheek, they are then provided with the sum total of charms that, in the eyes of the Andalusian *majo*, complete his picture of female loveliness. As we walked through the streets, it was incumbent on our politeness to exchange greetings with the various families that sat at their thresholds, plying their household occupations in that public position, in preference to the dark interior of their dwellings. The accent in which they spoke sufficiently betrayed

their Moorish ancestry; it was thick and guttural, and as different from the drawl and clipped Castilian of Seville or Cadiz, as the English of Yorkshire is from that of Bow bells. On the partition, brought into view by the door being kept open—which is the fate of nine out of ten doors in the village—the good housewives hang up for display such articles as they think will have an imposing effect upon the minds of observers. Among these, pots and pans in bright array made the most important figure; while the interstices were filled up with pictures, looking-glasses, images of the Virgin, and other finery.

As we were on our way back to the inn, we came to a building whose narrow windows and gloomy appearance led us without inquiry to understand its use; and my companion turned aside to look in through a close grating that admitted light and air to one of the dungeons. It was so dark within that nothing was visible; and we should have concluded it was without a tenant, had not a voice issued from a corner, and in deep tones cried “Que hay?” “La bahia junto à Cadiz,” promptly replied my friend; and to this the other as quickly rejoined, “Y tambien al Puerto.” What this means, the uninitiated reader will probably be at

a loss to know; and I shall therefore inform him that it was merely an exchange of slang, in which the advice to mind each other's business was tendered on both sides. Our friend in the corner, however, followed up his advice with a variety of remarks upon our outward appearance; and as in this he had a great advantage, from being himself invisible, the combat was so unequal that we left him to growl out his anathemas in solitude. He was one of the seven prisoners whose escape from the prison of Moguer I have already mentioned. They had fled towards the Sierra by the route we ourselves had taken; and this individual, being unable from fatigue to keep pace with his comrades, attempted to conceal himself in some growing corn near the village. It chanced, however, that he was espied by a corregidor, who observing something suspicious in this movement, demanded of him what he was doing there. He replied that he came to reap the corn, and that his fellow-reapers, having got drunk, had left him there. This answer not appearing satisfactory to the corregidor, the passport was demanded. The other at first attempted to question the authority of the village official, but on the latter despatching a friend for

his gun, at last admitted that he was without a passport, and was ready to go to prison.

A path like that by which we approached Valverde continued to wind along the ridges of the Sierra, till at sunset it brought us to Zalamea la Real. Without being savage or sublime, there was a stern and lonely aspect about the scenery, that powerfully impressed the feelings; we did not meet a creature by the way, save one, who first became visible as an object standing on the summit of a distant rock, and leaning upon what my friend imagined to be an escopeta. Both he and the mozo immediately jumped to the conclusion that he must be one of the fugitive prisoners from Moguer,—perhaps the scout of his comrades in the neighbourhood; and in a trice their own pieces were cocked, and prepared for action. As usual, it was a false alarm; the suspicious character proved to be a goatherd tending his flock and leaning on his staff, and probably conducted to that conspicuous position by no other motive than the wish to see as much as could be seen of life, in the solitude where his days were spent. Doubtless he was an honest man and true, but clothed as he was in sheepskins from head to foot, and eyeing us intently from

under a weather-beaten sombrero, he looked the savage and robber to perfection.

It was a holiday in Zalamea, as appeared by many tokens. Upon the steps of a stone cross by the roadside, as we entered, was seated a party of village maidens, clad in their gayest attire. One of them was playing the guitar, to the sound of which two others were dancing the fandango; but as soon as they caught sight of us the dance was stopped, and the pair ran away to hide themselves among their companions. Further on, as we were descending the steep and slippery streets of the village, another party came in view, diverting themselves with all the simplicity of a mountain life. It was a sort of procession they formed, and the foremost couple advanced with their arms wound round each other's necks, and singing some Andalucian strain, to which the others now and then joined in chorus: their bashfulness was not awakened by our presence, and the song continued, probably to the words of a couplet improvised in allusion to ourselves, as is the common practice in this land of music and song.

The situation of the village was not unlike that of Valverde. It occupied the centre of a deep

hollow in the sierra, shut out from the world, and from every prospect but the heavens overhead, by a girdle of mountain masses, as treeless and withered as if spring was a stranger to the place. It seemed, indeed, as if the verdure that might have crept along their stony sides had been swept down to the village, and the little platform on which it stood: here, from the luxuriance of vegetation, the abundance of snug hedge-rows, and the general air of industry around, the prospect was as cheerful and animating as the other was the reverse. The village itself was in nothing superior to its neighbours, but was excessively clean—a distinction it shares in common with many towns of this part of the sierra. It is no exaggeration to say, that upon their streets, as the saying is, you might safely eat your dinner. We visited the church, which contained nothing worthy of remark; but upon issuing from it our friend Don Dionisio C—— was waiting at the door to welcome us to his native village. Don Dionisio was an opulent farmer, with whom I had become acquainted in Moguer, and on his departure for Zalamea had kindly charged himself with the commission to procure me horses or mules for my journey to Cazalla; he now informed me that he

had engaged for me a couple of mules and a mozo to be depended upon. A cordial welcome, however, was not the whole of Don Dionisio's kindness; he conducted us to his home, and insisted upon our making it our quarters as long as we sojourned in the village. It was an act of charity, for which I regretted I could not offer a more substantial acknowledgment than thanks; for, in truth, any place would have been a paradise compared with the wretched abode, half stable, half caravanserai, that passed as the inn of the place.

Early the next morning Don Ignacio and myself were in the saddle, and waiting beside a fountain on the outskirts of the village for a friend, who had promised to accompany and guide us to the mines of the Rio Tinto. As soon as he appeared, we struck into a bridle-path, that crossed several ridges where their summits were most broken and precipitous, and was altogether so villanously bad, that nearly an hour and a half elapsed ere we accomplished the whole distance, which was no more than a league, or four miles. From the moment of starting, however, the point of our destination was indicated to our eyes by a column of thin white vapour rising uninterruptedly from one spot, and

then streaming away to the south; this was the smoke occasioned by the calcination of the copper ore before it is removed to the smelting furnaces. As we drew nigh to the mines, the scenery became more savage and dreary; at one point, on rounding the shoulder of a rocky range, there rose before us a ridge of dark red hue, every cliff and rock of which, in addition to the fantastic shapes assumed, seemed as if scorched and rent by the all-powerful action of fire. A little further on, the village of the Rio Tinto came into view, situated in a narrow vale formed by the continuation of the ridge just mentioned and another equally lofty; on its sides hung some straggling pines, and occasional patches of cultivation, to balance the gaunt aspect of the other, upon which sterility seemed branded for ever. My first move, on reaching the village, was to present a letter of introduction of which I was the bearer to the chief director of the mines; and as soon as that gentleman comprehended the purport of my visit, he volunteered to accompany us through them as soon as he had heard mass.

In the mean time we strolled, after leaving him, to the mouth of the shaft from which the ore was drawn up. The whole machinery, if indeed it was

worthy of that title, was of the rudest description. It simply consisted of a windlass, at which four men were stationed, and undergoing the severest labour in drawing up bucketfuls of ore. On one of the party making a remark to that effect, the oldest of the labourers bitterly exclaimed, "Si, y para ganar seis reales;" and, in truth, fifteen pence was but a poor requital for the incessant toil demanded by their occupation. The director, as soon as his morning devotions allowed him, led us to a door in the side of the mountain, over which an image of the Virgin was placed, to watch over the safety of all who passed beneath it. This was the entrance for the miners and others; a long passage then became visible, which we traversed without inconvenience till we arrived at a shaft, where it was necessary to descend by ladders. The gallery was perfectly dry, with the exception of one or two spots upon which moisture was perceptible, and over these planks were laid.

This precaution is absolutely necessary, for the water of the mines is so surcharged with the sulphate of copper as to corrode and destroy almost everything with which it comes in contact. On descending the ladders, we found the temperature

sensibly increasing, and then entered a lofty and vaulted gallery, the result of the workings of ages. The ore does not run in veins, as is usual in other mines, but is found disseminated in the rock, which here forms entire hills. The process, therefore, of extracting it is very simple; it is not mining but quarrying, nothing more being necessary than to hew out the rock and send it in blocks to the furnace. As if, however, to counterbalance the ease with which it is obtained, the percentage of metal is so poor as scarcely to repay the labour of the miners; three per cent., as I was informed, being the utmost obtained from the richest portions of the rock. On all parts of this spacious gallery, above our heads, and on its sides, were beautiful crystallisations of copperas; these were caused by the water that percolated through the crevices of the rocks, and, spreading over the interior surface, deposited a lining of the most delicate blue and white tint it was possible to imagine. Further on, we entered a side gallery, in which the temperature was equal to that of an oven, and here were a few miners at work, stripped of every unnecessary article of clothing, yet with the perspiration streaming from

every pore. Their haggard looks and wasted forms sufficiently denoted the unhealthiness of their occupation, and how dearly existence was purchased.

The principal attraction of the mine, however, is its stream of sulphate of copper, without which it is questionable whether its working would not be abandoned. The waters issue from the mine at two or three different points, and are collected a little below the village into a stream towards which we bent our steps to behold the silent formation of the copper, by a process we owe to the light of science. Along the bed of the stream a wooden trough was conducted, into which the waters flow, and in this were laid plates of iron. By a chemical affinity it is unnecessary to explain, the particles of the iron are so acted upon as to be replaced by those of copper, which, when refined, yield from seventy to eighty per cent. of pure metal. As soon as one plate is judged to be completely transmuted, it is removed, and another substituted, so that the process is continually in action. Our conductor lifted up one of the lids placed to prevent extraneous substances from falling into the troughs, and showed to our view the copper at the bottom, retaining the

original form of the iron plates, and by the force of the current burnished as bright as any hand could make it.

On taking a portion of it in the hand it crumbled into powder, and when dry, was scarcely to be distinguished from the rust of iron. The water, it is hardly necessary to say, was intensely acid, from whence the stream is termed the "agua agria." Lower down, it serves to turn a wheel employed in the smelting-house, wherein every part of the machinery was constructed on the most rude and simple manner. A good deal of the copper is sent to Seville, where it is used in the cannon foundries, and a smaller portion finds its way to Segovia, for the purpose of being issued in the shape of coin. The chief obstacle, however, to the profitable working of the mine, arises from the scarcity and consequent dearness of fuel. The article principally, if not solely, used is pine wood, which is brought from a great distance on the backs of mules: the nearer localities have long ago been exhausted of their timber, while from the improvident spirit so characteristic of this country, no pains have been taken to rear up forests in the room of those the axe has cleared away. Very lately the

price of wood had risen, in consequence of the increased distance from whence it must be brought; and should a further rise take place, the effect would be ruinous to the establishment. Mounting our horses, we followed the windings of the road till it brought us to Planes, where there is a manufactory of copperas, the production of which is effected by the boiling and evaporation of the *agua agria*. Here, as in the other establishment, everything was primitive and rude; the fuel was the brushwood of the neighbourhood, bundles of which were from time to time cast below some copper pans in which the liquid was heated; in another corner were some tubs provided with sticks, upon which, when it cooled, the copperas might crystallise.

Planes is situated, or rather hangs, upon the side of the mountain ridge that holds the ore in its depths. From thence we proceeded to the site of the ancient mines by a narrow path, where a stumble or false step of our horses might have sent the luckless rider down the steep declivity into the bed of the Rio Tinto, some hundreds of feet below. These are situated on the reverse of the ridge, very nearly at the back of the modern workings. As the path approached them it was fringed on either side by

cork trees, skirting fields of ripening grain, and finally wound between immense heaps of scorix and rubbish, that rose grim and swarthy above the luxuriant scene. In truth, continued hillocks of the latter attested the antiquity of the mines, and the toils of past generations.

There were, besides, other memorials of the past in the vestiges that survived of the ancient Bætica, for here was once a Roman town, called into existence by the mineral treasures of the mountain. These relics, for the most part, consisted of large blocks hewn out of the reddish stone of the neighbourhood, intermingled with fragments of overthrown columns; close by was the cavern-like entrance to the ancient mines. At what date, or by whom, the ore was first extracted, we have no means of ascertaining; but, at all events, from the discovery in an old working of an inscription to the Emperor Nerva, we may form some notion as to the antiquity of the town that had Roman miners for its population, and fell in the general decay of the Roman empire.

Following again the same path, we retraced our steps to Zalamea, which was reached about three o'clock, and without loss of time Don Ignacio de-

terminated to proceed, in order to reach Valverde that evening. Our parting was, I trust, one of mutual regret; neither before nor since did I meet in Andalusia his equal for manly feeling, nor a nature which so quickly awakened confidence and friendship; and short as our intimacy had been, I felt, on leaving him, as if I had quitted an old friend. Early next morning I was on the road to Aracena, the most northern of the towns I purposed visiting in this group of sierras. Our route for nearly a league was the same by which we journeyed to the mines, but when nigh them my mozo struck off to the left, and then our path skirted a ridge on which seemed traced the withering effects of fire. The whole scene was a picture of savage desolation; and though now it lay in silence and grim repose, there were yet so many vestiges of ruinous destruction visible, that the thoughts irresistibly recurred to the period when the huge masses around were glowing with heat, and the sierra itself reeling amid the convulsive movements of nature. On all sides rocks were riven and shattered, and displayed on their sides every variety of swarthy colour, while in many places the path wound beneath cliffs of a deep blood-red hue, unrelieved by a solitary speck of

verdure. The transition was, therefore, the more unexpected and welcome, when, on the other side of the range, I looked upon a smiling prospect of fruitfulness and plenty—an undulating expanse covered with fields of wheat and cork trees. This was the character of the scenery for hours, till, on ascending a height, there rose into view the castle of Aracena: its brown masses occupied the summit of a lofty peak, from which, as from a centre, a sierra on either side stretched away into the blue horizon. It was lost to view as soon as we descended a few paces into a wooded slope, at the bottom of which the village of Campo Frio unexpectedly appeared, environed with trees, and altogether the most picturesque of the villages I had yet seen. We bent our steps to the posada, there to make our noontide repast. It was a miserable cabin, and the master of it was a short, square-built, hard-featured man, whom we had passed lounging at the door of a neighbour's house, and who speedily made his appearance to receive his guests. To receive his guests! Alas! for them, scant is the welcome in store when, faint and weary, they stand at the open door of the venta or posada. They enter: if the inn-keeper be in a particularly good humour, he deigns to cast them a look, or per-

haps inquires from whence they come, and sometimes goes so far as to show where their animals may be stalled: if, however, as is usually the case, his temper be none of the best, he sits at the doorway apparently unconscious of the arrival or departure of the strangers, or else only marking their movements with a sullen aspect. All this would be a trifle unworthy of aught but a moment's notice, were it not coupled with so much barefaced roguery and extortion as altogether to make the compound of incivility and imposition a thing very hard to swallow. My host, however, of Campo Frio, belonged to the better order of his cloth, and I reproached myself before I had been ten minutes under his roof for certain uncharitable inferences suggested by his unprepossessing exterior. Pointing to myself, he addressed the mozo: "Italiano?" "No," replied the other; "Ingles?" "Ah," he continued, turning to me, "I speaks English;" and in the same breath, as if it was a weight upon his conscience, of which he must be rid by communication with me, proceeded to unfold his history. This, in truth, was an eventful one. He had served as a soldier in the War of Independence, and in one of the luckless defeats

sustained by his country's arms, was made a prisoner by the French. What induced him to enter their service he did not choose to say; but, at all events, he was withdrawn from Spain, and was a sharer in the opening battles of the Russian campaign. Fortunately for himself, he deserted to the Russians eight or ten days before the burning of Moscow and the disastrous retreat to the Vistula, but, not liking the service of his new masters, begged to be delivered to the English. The request was granted, and in course of time he reached England, and was placed in a depôt of Spaniards somewhere near London. There he remained for nearly a year, and was at length restored to his native country by way of Gibraltar. Although a prisoner during the whole of that time, his recollection of England appeared to be far from unpleasant. Much praise did he bestow upon the treatment of himself and fellow-captives; and, in particular, he lingered with so much satisfaction upon the days when his ration of bread and meat was as much as he could devour, that I fancied he almost wished them back again, though at the expense of his liberty. All this was narrated in Spanish, the English of my host having broken down before a few words had passed his

lips; yet, ludicrous as it was, no small pride did he feel in his proficiency, and, as I could see, was considered a prodigy of learning by an admiring audience, composed of his wife and children.

In the mean time, my mozo displayed our stock of eatables upon a table so low that no human legs could find room under it, and with much gravity proceeded to make a gaspacho. This is an Andalusian compound—the dish, *par excellence*, of the country. Marcos pulled forth a couple of horns—one filled with oil, and the other with vinegar—a roll of bread, and then commenced bruising a little garlic in a wooden bowl, that likewise was extracted from his wallet. Into this was poured a portion of the oil and vinegar, a couple of onions previously cut into pieces; and lastly, some large slices of bread being crumbled into it, water was added to the brim, and then the art of the cuisinier was exhausted. Of this savoury mess he offered me a share; but half-a-dozen spoonfuls sufficed to satisfy my curiosity, and I preferred the dry bread and meat with which we were provided. Seeing this, my host invited me to a share of a repast he had prepared for himself, on a table as low and uncomfortable as that at which I was seated. Vainly I

endeavoured to excuse myself, protesting that I was not hungry; that I could not think of trespassing on his hospitality; and so forth. No denial would be taken by my host, except as an offence to himself; and with many misgivings, therefore, I arose and placed myself opposite him. Between us was a bowl, containing a dark-looking fluid—the black broth of Sparta was not more repelling—on the surface of which were floating several fragments of meat; while from time to time the hand of my entertainer, which water had not in all probability touched for a month, was immersed in the mess, in pursuit of others that were hidden to the eye. At his side was a basket, containing bread, eggs, and other edibles, which he drew out and placed before me with the air of a man who had seen the world. He cast a look of contempt at the fork with which I fished out one or two of the floating pieces, and doubtless must have marvelled much at the hesitation with which I swallowed them; but, as a good citizen of the world, he said nothing, and allowed me to finish with the bread. At parting, my surprise was awakened when he sturdily refused to accept of any recompense for the little we demanded. “No, no,” he said, “you are an Englishman, and

I will take nothing from you, for I have eaten the bread of your country; and, moreover, if you pass this way again, I will give you a line to a cousin of mine who lives in the Plaza (*i.e.* Gibraltar), and has a situation in the establishment of the contractor of provisions to the garrison; and for my sake I am certain he will show you every attention." Even an attempt to slip a peseta into the hand of one of the children was no less firmly repulsed; and I quitted his roof, glad to learn that mixing with the world does not always extinguish the better feelings of our nature.

Descending the slope on which the village lies, we crossed a valley clothed with evergreen oaks, and slowly climbed the mountain confronting us. In this fashion we toiled with patient industry amid the labyrinths of a wild mountain range, our mules creeping up the steep acclivities by paths winding to the summits, and again descending their opposite sides with cautious steps. After three hours spent in this tortoiselike advance, our nearer approach to Aracena was announced by the greater abundance of trees by the wayside, and fields of grain scattered over the mountain slopes. Our path up the ascent, crowned by the castle of Aracena, was between

hedges and walls, whose appearance recalled the lanes and hedgerows of England. In Andalusia there is in general no other division between fields and properties but that presented by rude embankments of earth, on which the aloë and prickly pear, with their panoply of thorns, set at defiance the passage of man and beast. If well tended, more efficient fences cannot be; but the care of the husbandman generally ceases with the first formation of the hedge: it is left to thrive or decay just as chance may decree, and hence the usual prospect that meets the eye of the traveller on surveying a cultivated expanse, is to behold it dotted with solitary aloës, marking where fences had once stood. Here however the reverse was visible; few traces of carelessness were observable, either in the fences or cultivation; and having everywhere seen the gifts of nature in this rich and fertile country rendered valueless by the apathy of its people, it was a cheering sight to encounter on spots in the midst of the sierras evidences of labour and industry similar to that by which, in my own country, the obstacles of an ungrateful climate and soil are met and overcome.

Nothing could be more picturesque than the

situation of the town when it became visible upon emerging from the lane by which our approach was made. It lay in a secluded hollow of the mountains, formed by the height on which the castle stood and a corresponding eminence at no great distance, and was overhung on all sides by woody slopes. High above it were craggy ridges, upon which the blast might howl, but its voice could scarcely descend to the sequestered nook in which the town rose, so deeply was it recessed within its encompassing heights. In a few moments we traversed the streets, here as elsewhere in the towns and villages of the Sierra remarkably clean, and halted before the posada, which proved to be the best I had yet met out of Seville, inasmuch as it boasted of a decent apartment or two, not altogether devoid of a regard to the traveller's comfort.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARACENA—ITS CASTLE—THE INTOXICATED PRIEST—EFFECT OF
THE SCENERY—EL PALACIO—LOSE OUR WAY—BIVOUAC IN
THE SIERRA — SANTA MARIA — THE DEBATE — THE LOST
BURRO.

MINE host, though anything but a jolly fellow in proportions, for a breath might have blown him away, was at heart disposed to be complaisant, and on my inquiring for a guide to the lions of the town, volunteered his own services for that purpose. Our first visit was to the castle, whose turrets had been for half the day the object of my contemplation; and after a steep pull we stood under the walls. Near the summit stands a church, to all appearance constructed out of a portion of the ancient fortifications, but in the interior exhibiting traces of the early Gothic style of architecture. The custodier was sitting on the steps as we approached—a venerable old man, whose flowing

beard and fantastic costume, added to the staff he bore in his hand, were in strict keeping with the title of hermit by which my guide accosted him; in other times he might have passed as a pilgrim, pausing here to rest before resuming his weary progress to some holy shrine.

From the summit a wide and varied prospect opened to the eye. To the south stretched a succession of plains and valleys, their fruitful soil overspread with vegetation; and beyond these, in the distance, a wilderness of sierras, upon whose giant crests the gloom of evening was sinking fast. In the opposite direction the town lay at our feet, apparently struggling for a footing with the ridge that ran parallel with that on which we stood, and wherever the mountains receded, sending out long lines of streets to fill up the level spaces between.

At the back of the church my guide directed my attention to an arch of brick built into the rock, and bearing undoubted traces of great antiquity. At the top of the pillars, upon which the arch rested, it was possible to detect some traces of sculptural embellishments, although so obliterated by the hand of time as to render their shape or

character a mere matter of conjecture. "Don't you think this looks like the head of a bull?" said my guide, pointing to one of the carvings, which consisted of a few lines scored upon the surface of the smooth stone. With some assistance from my imagination I discovered the resemblance; and then, continued he, "Does not this look like its tail?" Now, if it really was a tail, it was just as like a peacock's as a bull's, and so I suggested to my host, but with true antiquarian fervour he scouted my remark, as being conceived in a shamefully sceptical spirit. He then proceeded to narrate, how there was in relation to this bull an ancient prophecy, which thus ran: "In frente de este toro, hay un tesoro" (in front of this bull there lies a treasure): "but whether it be a mile or a yard distant, how deep, or how to be obtained, no man," said my host, "can tell."

* Had my host exercised as much imagination in regard to the interpretation of the prophecy as he had displayed in decyphering this memorial of the past, he might have perceived that the treasure which lay in front was the rich and fertile country over whose vineyards and pastures, fields of grain and olive-groves, the eye could not wander without recognising in them a source of wealth far more

lasting and profitable than hidden gems or gold; but influenced by the spirit of his countrymen—a spirit which would consume days or months in digging for buried riches, in the hope of attaining wealth by a sudden bound, rather than by the toilsome path of laborious exertion—he could divine no meaning in the tradition further than that prompted by its literal reading and his own unbounded faith in the existence of treasures beneath the soil.

Of the castle itself, nothing remained but fragments of mouldering walls and ruined bastions to attest that it once had been a stronghold of importance. As a modern fortress, it was incapable of the slightest defence; but from the care bestowed upon its fortifications by the Moors, and the multitude of square towers by which every accessible point was defended, it was manifest that, before the era of modern warfare, it must have played an important part in the fortunes of the surrounding district. One custom still lingered, coeval, probably, with the foundation of these walls, and on the score of its utility surviving the lapse of ages, and the ruin that had overtaken their turbaned founders. Every evening, at sunset, a light is displayed from the tower of the

church by which the lower peak of this fastness is crowned; the light is maintained till morning, and is dedicated to the Virgin, who from that circumstance is styled "Nuestra Señora de Guia." She is the protectress of the belated traveller, to whom this tower, sending its light for leagues through the cloud of night, rises as a beacon to guide his steps, in the same manner as, by day, he is directed by the castle turrets, conspicuously visible long ere he reaches the town at their base.

Next morning, in company with a gentleman to whom I carried a letter of introduction, I made a round of the churches in the town. In several there were good paintings to be seen, though sadly obscured by the veil of dust that lay thick upon them, as upon every other work of art that had escaped the whitewashing mania of the custodians. In the sacristy of the parish church is a portrait of Arias Montanas, who was born at a village about two leagues from Aracena.

It is one of the penalties which the sightseer must pay for the indulgence of his curiosity in this country, that, in general, the very last things to be shown are those which are really most worthy of note. On entering a church, the sacristan imme-

diately hurries you to the altar, in the expectation of beholding you transfixed with rapture before some vile image of the Virgin—a thing of painted wood, covered with tawdry ornaments, and, as a work of art, far inferior in taste and execution to those specimens of feminine beauty by which perfumers' shops are embellished. In the same spirit are you conducted to inspect the service of church plate, and the vestments of the church functionaries. The latter are invariably displayed with feelings of pride, while a moment's leisure is with difficulty extorted, in order to survey such of the works of the ancient masters as may hang in neglect upon the walls.

Our survey ended, I was conducted by my companion to his dwelling, and ushered into a study, from a cupboard in which he brought out a stone bottle of liqueur, and set about all the preparations for a drinking match. It was not without surprise I beheld his movements: the customs of the country are opposed to strong potations at all times, and especially before breakfast; and I was at a loss to know what I should ascribe them to, till it struck me that my entertainer might be one of those who imagine, as multitudes of his countrymen do, that from dinner-

time till midnight, every Englishman, the highest ranks not excepted, is in a state of intoxication; and that, as a natural consequence, nothing should I prize so much as the opportunity of indulging in the national vice. It soon, however, became obvious that this supposition was wrong, and that, if my entertainer was influenced by any motive, it was rather the wish to victimise an aged priest who had joined us in our walk, and now made one of the party. It was an easy triumph, for the failing of the poor man was written on his face; and as he never refused the bumpers with which his entertainer plied him, the result may be anticipated. In less than half an hour he was carried out of the room by an attendant; and it is but due to him to say that, for representing intoxication in all its shapes within the compass of that short period, few would venture to equal him. He was garrulous, jovial, lachrymose, amatory, sullen, and finally insensible. In the amatory stage, he advanced into the centre of the room, discoursing learnedly of the joys of love—a strange theme for old age and celibacy—and then, suddenly turning aside to the youngest of the listeners, kissed him on the cheek ere he could prevent the unwelcome salute. It was an exhibition that filled one

with disgust, not so much at the pitiable spectacle I was compelled to witness, as at the heartlessness which could find sport in the degradation of grey hairs; so I quitted my entertainer, and saw him no more.

The reverend padre, while in possession of his faculties, mentioned that the following custom prevailed in a neighbouring village when a young man wished to profess himself the suitor of some fair maiden. On that occasion he proceeds to her residence, bearing in his hand the long staff used by the mountaineers, called *cachiporra*, or shortly, *porra*, and announces his presence by a loud knock at the door. At the same time, the staff is placed by the side of it, and he retires a short distance, previously exclaiming, "*Porra dentro u porra fuera?*" (*porra* within or *porra* without?) Should the maiden be disposed to favour his suit, she approaches and removes the staff in-doors; but if adverse, it is whirled to the other side of the street: whereupon the lover understands his fate, and wends his way back, rejected and disconsolate.

In the evening my *mozo* brought me the information that a party of muleteers were about to proceed to *Cazalla* with a cargo of bacon, and coupled

his news with the proposal that I should defer my own departure in order to swell their numbers.

"Wherefore should I do this?" I inquired. "Are they armed?"

"No, Señor," he rejoined; "but then the advantage of their company!"

It was hard to perceive what benefits would arise from their society, though on this point both my host and mozo were agreed; but in reality the motive to this request lay in the well-known disinclination of all ranks in this country to travel alone. Subsequently, after some months of wandering, I felt more disposed to yield to proposals of this kind; for after the novelty of a solitary march had worn off, it was impossible at times to repress the feeling of loneliness that crept over the spirits amid scenes of solitude as silent and lifeless as the desert.

There is something pervading the scenery of this land, the effect of which it is difficult to describe, except by saying that it impresses one as no other scenery does; a stern, and at the same time a melancholy grandeur, the latter quality predominating, even among the vast and fruitful plains you slowly traverse, and more especially when winding amid a wilderness of tenantless *dehesas*, or by the sides of

lofty sierras. At these times there mingled with the impressions of awe and sublimity one felt none of those elevating thoughts inspired by the contemplation of nature on a vast scale; on the contrary, the effect was somewhat repelling, and resembled that produced by gazing upon a countenance where an expression of evil mingles with noble lineaments.

While my mozo, on the one hand, was urging me to be sociable, my host came forward with the usual tale of robberies on the way. "Maldito camino!" he said; "on that road was I robbed of 8000 reals, by three men, and five tracked me all the way from Cazalla for the same purpose." A little cross-examination, however, elicited the fact that this robbery occurred three years before, our host being unarmed at the time, and that no aggressions on travellers had since that date been perpetrated; so, in despite of the warnings and prophecies of the twain, I intimated that I was prepared to depart alone next morning, and that though willing to be reinforced by the muleteer auxiliaries, I would by no means delay my movements on their account.

Before sunrise we were threading our way through a labyrinth of hedge-rows and olive-groves, with our faces turned towards Cazalla: our path

doubled and wound till it conducted us to a wood of evergreen oaks, which it took more than an hour to traverse. A better ambush for the salteadores, of whom I heard so much yesterday, could nowhere be found than among the ravines and broken ground with which it was intersected. I was now journeying eastward, having, in pursuance of my original plan to keep within the province, diverged from the northerly direction I had hitherto taken, by continuing in which I should have speedily reached the frontiers of Estremadura.

For some hours our course was a gradual descent from the mountainous elevations of Aracena, by the side of a small stream, whose clear waters were hurrying to swell the current of the Guadalquivir. The stream, in fact, was our guide, and our path crossed and recrossed it twenty times, once leading us unexpectedly to the small village of La Corte, concealed among orchards and evergreen oaks. On either side as we journeyed rose sierras with rounded outlines, differing little from those I had already crossed; from their summits descended dreary tracks of underwood to spread over their sides, and unite in the narrow vale through which we moved. Here and there a patch of bright green would come into

view, denoting a partial attempt at cultivation; but, these excepted, there were no other signs, amid a progress of leagues, to testify that the country was not wholly abandoned by man.

About mid-day we passed through the village of Cala, which afforded a striking contrast to those higher up in the mountains, from the state of ruin in which it stood, superadded to the squalid misery that was expressed on the visages of a few forlorn individuals whom our appearance attracted to their doors. Our approach to it was through a wide level, covered with brushwood and straggling groves of oak; while in the distance another range, crossing our course, foretold the fatigues we were yet to encounter before our day's journey was brought to a close. Outside of the village we came to a halt beneath a chestnut-tree, and prepared to make our noonday meal. The mules were divested of their *aparejo*, and no sooner was the last article of their gear removed than each animal cast itself on the ground, to enjoy the luxury of a roll in the dust before Marcos fastened on the hobbles by which their erratic movements were to be restrained. This done, he compounded and discussed his *gaspachos*, and after smoking a paper cigar, composed himself

for a siesta in the shade of the spreading foliage above our heads.

At the end of an hour we were once more on the wing. A short distance brought us to the great road from Seville to Badajos, which we crossed, not without a look of envy from myself, as I regarded its admirable condition, suggestive of whirling along at ten miles an hour of speed, and compared it with the rugged and narrow path along which our mules must crawl at a pace that consumes a whole day in performing the same distance which on the other would be the work of a few hours. I was saved, however, from further repinings by entering upon a vast undulating plain, which for beauty of a wild and striking description far exceeded anything I had yet seen. Scattered over its surface were clumps and solitary trees of evergreen oak, mingling with masses of rock, sometimes piled in cairns, sometimes strewed in profusion, but so picturesquely varied by hollows and glades as to present one of those rare landscapes in the making of which Nature seems to have called in every charm. Art itself, in its most wayward and prolific moments, could have produced nothing to surpass this natural park. The effect was further heightened by a

conical elevation in the centre, round whose summit ran a natural wall of rock, in which fancy might easily trace the mouldering battlements of a venerable castle. The resemblance, indeed, must have been striking, for it had procured for this mount the name of "El Palacio" from the dwellers in these regions. At the same time, the sinking sun was pouring a flood of light among the trees, with that splendour seen nowhere but in southern lands; so that the scene was carpeted with strange devices wrought in gold and dark shadows, and brilliant beyond description. There was warning, however, to ourselves in that same orb setting so gloriously, for by its last rays were we to seek our way over the wild sierra in front. On the other side of it were our quarters for the night, a hamlet called Santa Maria de la Zapatera. How far off it was Marcos could not recollect, for some years had elapsed since he had passed this way, and he was frequently at a loss whenever the path became more indistinct than usual.

At the foot of the sierra our path separated into two tracks, one striking up a barranco that clove the mountain from its summit to where we stood, and the other pursuing a less aspiring course along its

base. As the first appeared the most direct route, we unhesitatingly selected it, and for nearly an hour breasted the mountain side, our path, from the darkening light, becoming every moment less distinguishable. At length it was lost among the tall brushwood, which grew up to the very top of the ridge. In truth, it was evident before we thus came perforce to a halt, that the track had been long in disuse, and we had persevered only from the reflection that "returning were as tedious as go o'er." However, the former seemed now our only alternative; and without a moment's delay, for the short twilight was at its close, the mules were forced through the bushes in the direction most likely to conduct us to the other path, which unquestionably was the right one. No idea can be formed of the difficulty of such a proceeding, however simple it may seem. Our tired animals struggled for a short distance with the matted growth of the brushwood, which it required all their strength and weight to part asunder, and in doing which their riders ran no small risk of being swept off their backs by the violent recoil of the elastic boughs.

The contest was, however, beyond their power to continue long, even had they been fresh and

vigorous, and endowed with the strength of giants. Once more we came to a stand-still; our animals, with their limbs trembling and sides heaving from their excessive toil, refused to advance a step further. The present dilemma was considerably worse than the first: we were now caught in a trap of branches and twigs from which there appeared no release; we could neither return nor advance, even if we had known what direction to take. For my own part, I saw no better prospect than to lie down where we were, and wait till the returning light came to our aid. This was no novelty to my mozo, who, as he assured me, had "camped out" for nights while acting once as an itinerating vendor of oranges; but I was unused at that time to a "lodging upon the cold ground," and felt doubtful whether contact with mother earth under such circumstances was an invigorating treatment for one who had left England as an invalid. Still, there was no remedy, and after a brief debate we urged our reluctant animals a few yards deeper in the under-wood, and brought them to a cleared space espied by the eye of Marcos. Dismounting here, we made our preparations for a bivouac. The spot we had now reached was a singular one: it was a patch of

verdure, scarcely a few yards in circumference, and which by some chance had sprung up amid the surrounding brushwood. Nothing could surpass in richness and fragrance the herbage which grew upon it, and now promised a couch as perfumed and soft as that of a Sybarite. In a few minutes the task was over of unlading the mules and shackling their fore legs, lest they should be tempted to stray too far. Another moment or two was devoted to the contents of our wallets, and then Marcos proceeded to construct an off-hand pallet out of the trappings strewn around us. A horse-rug did duty as a mattress, or rather was stretched upon the thick natural mattress of wild flowers and herbage that covered the ground; a saddle served for a pillow; and what more would the tired traveller desire? Certain it is, that no sooner had I rolled myself in my manta and laid my head on the saddle, than the fatigues of a long march of nine leagues speedily brought sleep to my eyes. The last thing they rested upon was the spectacle of Marcos, with his horns of oil and vinegar before him, proceeding, despite of the darkness and the manifold difficulties, to the concoction of the everlasting gaspachos.

About midnight I awoke with a sense of oppres-

sion on my breast, which I found was caused by my careful attendant having heaped upon my person all the rugs and coverings upon which he could lay his hands. He himself reposed at my feet, indulging in nasal sounds loud enough to scare away such evil-disposed wolves as might be within hearing; but at this time of the year little danger was to be apprehended from their fangs. The darkness, however, had given place to the brightest moonlight I ever remember to have seen. Not even beneath the tropics have I witnessed anything comparable to that glorious silver light, diffused as I then saw it between heaven and earth; so brilliant and so palpable was the effulgence, that it seemed as if the rays might be caught in the hand and twined round the fingers in coils of lustre; and I almost fancied the bushes bent beneath their weight. Perhaps, from the novel circumstances of the moment, the scene left a more vivid impression than similar ones have done, for I readily call to mind that hour of moonlight, with all its solemnizing influences, the deep silence unbroken by aught except the distant baying of some watch-dog, or the whispering of the night air among the shrubs, the mountain swelling upwards from our resting-place in rounded lines,

and the shapes of others looming indistinctly through the silver haze. I bring to mind also having apostrophised the slumbering Marcos; and blessed my stars that he was the owner of an honest heart, for had he been so inclined I might never have wakened more. It was just the place where a thrust of the navaja might be given with the certainty that no tales would ever be told of its work. How it further fared with us I know not, until at earliest break of dawn we were astir, when Marcos went in search of the mules, with which he soon returned. Upon awaking, refreshed and invigorated, I reflected that a traveller might find many a worse place of rest than a grassy couch beneath the serene sky of Andalucia.

To be sure, there are no curtains, nor pillows of down, and your toilet is made when you have given yourself a hearty shake and run your fingers through your hair; but then there is no landlord to face in the morning, no vampires to disturb your night's rest, nor cry of fire to cause alarm; no damp sheets to sow rheumatism in the bones;—in short, you mount and ride away, as I did, wondering how people survive the dangers and discomforts of sleeping under a roof.

Now that the light of day made every object visible, it was no difficult matter to discover the right path. Into this our animals worked their way, through brake and briar, with comparatively little trouble, as it was all down hill; and we now found that the track, instead of breasting the sierra in Roman fashion, coasted along its base in a southerly direction. It led us to a "puerto," or mountain pass; and through the gap the ascent was an easy one to the summit, from whence, on the other side, there came into view the little hamlet of Santa Maria, where our quarters ought to have been the previous night. From our elevated station its cluster of lowly roofs, surrounding the village spire, seemed to rise in a little world of their own, the limits of which were the encircling sierras that closely hemmed in the small plain in the centre of which it stood. A slender stream wound round it and watered a succession of meadows, whose freshness and verdure gave an air of softness to this pastoral scene, in strong contrast with the savage and dreary mountains that towered above us. By the side of the same stream, leaping and brawling down the pass, we descended to the little valley, and entered the hamlet, whose inhabitants, even at that

early hour, were up and busy. Marcos immediately hied to the alcalde, for the purpose of getting our passports viséd. While he was absent in the workshop of the village Vulcan, who, it appeared, united in himself both these offices, I begged a glass of water from a woman, who, with many others, had been drawn to her door by the unwonted arrival of strangers. "Usted es de muy lejos?" (you are from afar?) she inquired as I thanked her. "Si, Señora; I am from England." "From England?" she repeated; "where is that town?" "It is a kingdom, far, very far, in that direction," I replied, pointing to the north-west. "Ah, Señor," she added, "my pueblo is also far off; I am from Llerena." "From Llerena in Estremadura?" "Yes," she answered, with a sigh. The reader will, perhaps, smile at my questioner's notions of distance, when he is informed that Llerena was only twelve miles from her present abode.

Such exaggerations, common as they everywhere are among the untravelled, are particularly so in Spain, because there a town may be very nigh another, and yet, from the wretched state of the roads, and the absence of the usual facilities for communication, be accessible only by a journey

demanding much time and fatigue to accomplish. Under such circumstances, it becomes virtually as remote from its neighbours as if it lay in another kingdom. But the evil does not end here: the effect of this state of isolation—a state in which many if not most Spanish towns exist—is to contract the range of their sympathies, and to reduce their love of country to a selfish but not unnatural predilection for the narrow circle that bounds their knowledge. Hence has arisen that spirit of localism—the bane of Spanish nationality—which he who strives to make them a united people will find to be an obstacle less readily overcome than those other difficulties, in the shape of a diversity of languages, manners, and privileges, with which he must contend. How deeply ingrained this spirit is in the Spanish character, we cannot fail to learn from the experience of past years; but if it were not so, every traveller who makes it his study to know the people of this country, while listening to the laudation which each individual bestows upon his native pueblo, coupled to a depreciating tone in respect to others, becomes impressed with the truth, that to maintain that fancied or real superiority, considerations of right or justice would be lightly regarded.

All would desire to see their country the first nation in the world—with this difference, that the first of its towns, and the lawgiver to the others, should be that particular community to which each belongs. While this feeling, therefore, exists, it would be hopeless to see the spirit of dissatisfaction nowhere lingering. To eradicate it, one must break down the physical barriers within which it takes root and flourishes. When these are surmounted by the conversion of the almost impassable bye-paths into practicable cross-roads, and by the formation of new routes across the wild mountain chains that traverse the land, the usual consequences will follow: communities and kingdoms hitherto estranged will be linked more closely together, and, in the widening range of their sympathies, will think and act, not for themselves, but for the welfare of the whole.

The village official did not detain us long, and our exit from his pastoral kingdom was by the banks of the stream whose rise we had witnessed higher up in the sierra. It led us again, after its brief pause among the green pastures, to a point in the encircling range where an opening admitted a passage for its waters into mountain scenery as wild and savage as that among which they first saw

the light. Our route from thence was a winding track by the base of lofty elevations that became at every step more stern and imposing. There was, however, something inexpressibly sombre in their features, which not even the flood of noonday light could lighten up; the most perfect solitude reigned as we became involved deeper in their recesses; and but for the path we followed, upon which the vestiges of footsteps were visible, we might have fancied ourselves in a wilderness which no foot dared to cross. It was refreshing meanwhile to have at our side the streamlet of which I have already spoken; there was society and companionship in the flow and life of its waters, the only moving things in that silent waste besides ourselves; and I felt sorry when we turned away to strike into the road that leads from Guadalcanal to Cazalla. Proceeding by this new route, the character of the scenery remaining unaltered, we reached another stream, on whose banks we halted under the shade of a wild ash, to make our repast after the usual gipsy fashion. Unlike the disporting current of the other, this moved on slow and sluggish, and formed in front of us a pool of an olive-green tinge. It was an admirable spot for a bath, and

had probably revived the strength of many a wearied passer-by, just as it was now refreshing the person of a countryman, whom we found luxuriating in its waters, while another was waiting for him on the brink. In a moment an acquaintanceship was struck up between the twain and my guide, much to the satisfaction of the latter, to whom a new conversationist had become a novel event since our departure from Aracena.

As a proof of the untravelled state of these mountain paths, I may mention that, from daybreak of the preceding day till the present hour, during which time we accomplished fifty miles of our journey, we had encountered no one on the way; neither had we, except in the villages we traversed, espied a human figure. Some idea, therefore, may be formed of the eagerness with which my guide flung himself upon his new associates, and of the unbroken flow of his powers of speech; which, to compare small things with great, resembled the rush of a torrent that, having been pent up by some powerful impediment, suddenly found egress for its accumulated waters. The first inquiries of the trio were respecting their places of birth. My guide was from Zalamea, and his acquaintances

from a village in the neighbourhood; this was enough to open their hearts, and cause them to regard each other as brother serranos. "Paysano," said the eldest of the pair, quite delighted with meeting a countryman, "sientese usted aqui," at the same time spreading a manta on the ground and inviting him to a share thereof. The young one, again, was not a whit less friendly, though in a different style. He communicated several particulars respecting his past life, and ended with the subject of his future prospects; a question that at the moment deeply engaged his thoughts. It appeared that an uncle of his, a sargento mayor in a regiment stationed in Madrid, had written to him to come up and push his fortunes in the metropolis. In proof of this, he pulled out a dirty and tattered letter, which he handed to Marcos to read for the benefit of the company. Marcos, however, was no scholar, and could make nothing out of it; and so, with the concurrence of the other, it was resigned to me. However, I had no better success in the matter of decyphering its contents. As, however, writing, spelling, and grammar are no part of a military education, it is no discredit to the worthy sergeant who penned the despatch to say, that his penmanship was a

collection of "pot-hooks and hangers" that defied the powers of any mortal but himself to read. But the want of proper information did not prevent Marcos from seizing upon so capital an opportunity for giving advice gratis. He debated the question, to go or not to go, with a zeal for the young man's interests that was truly edifying; and I am bound to record our decision was unanimous;—I say our, for my opinion was likewise requested upon the merits of the case. It was resolved that he should stay at home. What were the reasons that influenced my fellow-counsellors I cannot call to mind; for my own part, I was moved by the consideration that so simple a swain was no match for the wits of the Madrilenians, even under the auspices of a sergeant of the line.

During this conflict of tongues our teeth had been no less actively employed in the demolition of our various stores of provender. An hour having been thus spent, I started for Cazalla, much against the inclinations of Marcos, who would rather have postponed accomplishing the three leagues that remained of our journey until the sun had so far declined as to permit us to travel without being scorched by its noontide fierceness, which in the

valleys and gorges was at times well-nigh insupportable. Our new friends, being bound for the same town, prepared to join company, but a loud outcry from the youngest arrested our departure. His burro was gone—had mysteriously disappeared—and certainly was nowhere visible. Stranger still, although the others dispersed in search of it, no traces were found of its movements, and in fact nothing to explain this unaccountable disappearance. Upon the other side of the stream there stood a goatherd, a figure clothed from head to foot in sheep-skins, and who had stationed himself there to feast his eyes with the unwonted sight of his fellow-creatures in that lone region; and himself resembled some wild animal of the forest, attracted by the intrusion of the human form to gaze on the strange spectacle. Upon him fell the suspicions of the owner of the lost burro; and without considering the manifest improbability of the deed, he advanced to his own margin of the stream, and placing himself in a belligerent attitude, menaced the other with violent death in a variety of ways if he did not instantly restore the missing animal. Such a charge, as was to be expected, only called forth a gruff answer; and there is no knowing to

what lengths rage might have hurried the nephew of the sergeant, had not one of the company, while looking at some osiers overhanging the stream, espied the animal under their shade; its head was just appearing above the surface, the rest of the body being under water. The poor animal had either slipped in by accident, or, in imitation of its master, was recruiting its forces by a cool dip in the stream previous to a toilsome clamber in the sierra. From the moment of setting forth, our way was a continued ascent; the first part through a wild pass called the Puerto Alto: about a league from Cazalla the character of the country altered, and our progress was through lanes deep sunk in the soil; from the high banks on either hand hedges and trees threw a grateful shade across our steps. By and bye land in cultivation appeared, and then vineyards and gardens, surrounding country houses; all of these possessed orchards not far off, and many had trellised arcades of vines leading up to their doors. Amid this smiling prospect we approached our destination. Upon the very summit of the ridge we found a gentle hollow, in the centre of which, as in a nest, lay this mountain village. This site had probably been chosen by its founders from

its affording the best shelter from the blasts of winter, for its position is undoubtedly high, and the air during that season must be sharp and piercing. I went straight to the posada, but its appearance and condition bespoke better accommodation for beasts than for man, or rather none at all for the latter. As such an establishment as a casa de pupilos was unknown, I was perforce compelled to apply for assistance in this dilemma to no less a personage than the comandante de armas, to whom I carried a letter of introduction. In doing so I did not anticipate that the courteous comandante, after reading the letter and hearing my request, would insist upon my making his house my home during my stay in the town. Invitations of this nature are to be estimated more by the tone and manner of the speaker than by the literal meaning of his words; and so much frankness accompanied the offer that I could not doubt its sincerity. I therefore accepted it; nor had I reason subsequently to believe I had construed the words for more than they were meant.

CHAPTER IX.

CAZALLA—THE IRON MINES OF PEDROSO—ANDALUCIAN POLITENESS—THE GENTLE BEGGARS—TORQUEMADA AND HIS ASS—CONSTANTINA—LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION—BEAUTIFUL VIEW FROM THE CASTLE—THE REGIMENT IN PETTICOATS.

THE following day I rested on my oars, being in need of some repose, as every bone and muscle was aching from the severity of an almost uninterrupted ride of forty-eight hours under a blazing sun: for that day I was sated with an inspection of the only church in the town. This was an edifice in no respect remarkable for beauty or symmetry, being in fact partly unfinished; the original design, after the plainest style of Gothic, having been mingled with sundry additions in the shape of a belfry and porches, which were conceived in the true pepper-box order of architecture. The remainder of the day was spent in strolling along the shady lanes in the environs, sometimes

alone, and sometimes accompanied by my host when his duties afforded him leisure. I ought to mention that he had passed the middle term of life, and was a bachelor, and that his household was superintended by an elderly female and her niece, and that both were natives of the Basque Provinces. The next day, however, I was again in the saddle, and, accompanied by the comandante and several members of the ayuntamiento of the town, on my road to the iron mines of Pedroso, or, more accurately, the foundry attached to them. About this establishment there was little to detain one long. I found its merits very much overrated; and having been a listener as we rode along to the speculations of my companions regarding the amount of injury likely to be done by it to the iron works of my country, I could not help smiling on seeing this formidable competitor, whom the smallest of its giant rivals in England might swallow up with ease. The situation is in a narrow valley, through which straggle the dwellings of the workmen and superintendents: it is said to be very unhealthy, especially in summer, when agues prevail to a great extent. Nearly all the iron manufactured goes to the establishments of the

Rio Tinto and Almaden del Azogue; in the former to be converted into copper by the process I have already described, and in the latter to furnish the jars in which the quicksilver is transported. While the comandante and myself were inspecting the manufactory, the members of the ayuntamiento were closeted with the directors of the mines, being in fact a deputation from the civic authorities of Cazalla in reference to some claims upon the company. Apparently the dispute, whatever was its origin, had come to no amicable termination, for upon inquiring for our comrades we were directed to a farm-yard, where, to our surprise, we found them congregated. Although worsted in the fray, they still made an uncompromising stand for their dignity, and would not lower it by accepting any civilities, far less entering a house belonging to the enemy. Hence, therefore, the reason why we beheld them rolled in their mantas and stretched on the straw, disposing themselves to repose, like warriors after a hard-fought battle. They were now only waiting for our arrival to fall, like stalwart men as they were, upon the provender, of which some of the party, in anticipation of such a result, had prudently laid in a store.

Next day was that of Corpus Christi, a high festival in the Romish calendar, and throughout Spain celebrated by processions and other solemnities. I had seen in all its pomp and circumstance the "funcion" wherewith Seville honours that day; and remembering the levity and sneers to which the spectacle gave rise among the bystanders with whom I was accidentally mingled, I was anxious to know if the worshippers of Cazalla treated their images more reverently than did those beside whom I stood in the shadow of the great cathedral. Nothing of the kind, however, was observable here: all were serious onlookers, and allowed no words to escape their lips derogatory to the splendour of the procession. This consisted of an image of the Virgin, clothed, as usual, in a black velvet robe spangled with silver; in front moved a few banners carried by priests, whose expression I liked better than the stolidity of countenance that characterises their brethren of Seville; and in the rear followed a long string of women and children. Neither was their gravity disturbed by witnessing the prodigious efforts to keep step of four men and a corporal of the Cazalla nacionales, who formed a guard of honour to close the procession: their per-

formances in that way outdid anything the most awkward squad could get up.

In the evening my host made his appearance in full evening costume. I may remark, that in this the surtout, so far from being excluded, figures at parties just as frequently as the dress coat. Addressing me as if I were the master of the house, and he the guest, he requested permission to absent himself for an hour or two from my society. In the style and nature of his request there was much to call to mind the formal politeness for which the old Spaniards were so famous: many traces of this still linger, in despite of the growing attachment throughout the nation for French manners, and a certain off-hand manner on the part of the rising generation, which is affected as being the sign of manliness.

Of these old ceremonious observances, by far the most troublesome to the stranger is that which enjoins him, when at table, to address an invitation to share the good things thereon to such individuals as may enter the room in which he is seated: it is a mere courtesy, and the traveller will frequently hear it extended to him by the peasant on passing the door, before which he is devouring his repast of bread, garlic, and oranges. It was long, however,

before I schooled my tongue to utter the phrase in which the offer was couched, although well aware that it was neither expected nor intended that its purport should be understood in a literal sense. As long as this backwardness lasted, I doubt not I suffered in the estimation of native politeness, and was set down as a proud Englishman, "sin education," or at least so prejudiced in favour of my own customs, as to consider those of the country in which he dwelt as unworthy of adoption. Such, I fear, is the impression generally created by our conduct in regard to continental forms of politeness. Whenever these are harmless, it must be confessed, an obstinate adherence to our island customs is without excuse: yet, with every desire to be compliant, it is no easy matter to overcome an inward repugnance to saying what one does not mean; and as such a feeling is less understood among our continental neighbours than at home, it seldom enters among the motives to which they attribute our aversion to some of their peculiar usages and styles of phraseology.

As it was the last evening I was to spend in Cazalla, I set forth for a farewell stroll among its shady lanes: it was a luxury I might not soon enjoy,

and I was resolved to take advantage of the opportunity to the utmost. The apartment I occupied communicated with the sala, or principal room of the house, through which it was necessary to pass; and on my opening my door I beheld my host's house-keeper and her niece seated at its solitary table, and manifestly in deep distress of mind. Grief is a sacred thing, and I felt unwilling to intrude upon them; but as there was no other mode of egress, I could only steal as cautiously as I could towards the outer door. My consternation, however, was great when I found that the further I advanced into the room, the louder became the sobs of the females. I halted, uncertain what to do or say, until it flashed across my mind that somehow or other I might be connected with their sorrow. What have I done, thought I, to vex these poor people? but at all events it is my duty to inquire; which I accordingly did.

“Ay de mi,” said the old lady; “I am a Basque, of good blood, and never thought I should be brought to this; but we are doomed to trials, and I submit, although I cannot help repining a little.” This moralising vein I thought highly commendable, though rather out of place, and I compli-

mented her for the Christian spirit she displayed. "So you see," she continued, "another misfortune has occurred to us to-day; a little account has been sent in, which we are unable to pay. Ave Maria! that I should have lived to endure this."

I now understood the drift of the old hypocrite, who was vainly endeavouring, with the corner of her apron, to squeeze a tear from her eye. Making a virtue of necessity, I inquired what was the amount of the demand.

"Three dollars," exclaimed the two in a breath; and accordingly the three dollars took their flight from my purse.

"But you will say nothing about this to the comandante?" they said, when I turned to depart.

"Palabra de honor! no," I responded, and left the gentle beggars in possession of their ill-gotten charity, to moralise in my turn upon the manifold tricks that are played upon travellers.

At five o'clock the next morning I was on my way from Cazalla to Constantina, passing through a country eminently beautiful, while every charm in the landscape was enhanced by the delightful freshness of a southern morning. The road led down a valley whose sides were carefully culti-

vated, and at every step our path was crossed by brooks of the clearest water. Then there were on either hand those deep-worn traces of which I have already taken note, each one roofed over with the thick foliage of overarching trees, and promising coolness and shade, however high the sun might be in the heavens. The only drawback to the perfect enjoyment of this lovely scene arose from the conduct of my guide, who was much given to profane swearing, and unmerciful usage of his burro. On remonstrating with him in regard to his cruelty, he chose to be offended, and offered me advice in his turn.

“Take care, Señor,” said he, “how you interfere between a man and his donkey, which is just as bad as interfering between man and wife; and if you do, perhaps you may get the answer of Torquemada cast in your teeth.”

“What was that?” I inquired.

“Why, it so happened that Torquemada was beating his donkey very severely, when a courtier came by and bade him be more merciful to his beast. ‘I shall do so for the future,’ said Torquemada, ‘since I now find he is a relation of yours, from the interest you take in him.’ Wasn’t that well said, Señor?”

“Passing well for a beater of donkeys.”

On approaching Constantina, the termination to the valley through which we wound, was an alameda of magnificent elms, by which we entered the town. At the other end of the long street of which it consists was the house in which I had engaged an apartment, having previously sent intimation to that effect from Cazalla; and my landlord, having seen me pass, came running after to receive me. The next thing was to deliver my letters of introduction. This was always an agreeable task, as I invariably found a kindly welcome awaiting me, as much perhaps for the sake of the country of my birth, as from the recommendation of the friends by whom I was introduced. It is a pleasure to me to record, as the result of having presented more than fifty letters of introduction during the course of my wanderings in Andalusia, that wherever I went I was met with frankness and cordiality. Once, but only once, did I fail to experience the reception I believed I had a right to expect. At the same time it is right to caution the reader against supposing, that introductions in this land are, as at home, mere tickets for dinners. Spain is not a dinner-giving country, and its civilities are seldom brought to bear upon the appetites of strangers.

Notwithstanding this, there is more real kindness in the many little services which an introduction to a Spanish house secures to the bearer, than in the formal invitation to dinner that in England succeeds the presentation of a similar despatch, and generally constitutes the sum total of attention. I always found, on the part of my Andalusian friends, so much willingness to second my wishes, that I sometimes regretted having given them expression, when I saw the trouble of which I was the cause. Besides this, their offices as guides to the places of note in their respective towns were freely at my command, and whatever local information I desired was hunted up with as much ardour as if it were for their own use. Above all, I cannot forget how deeply indebted I was to their local knowledge for a service the value of which is only in Spain to be fully appreciated—that of procuring muleteers and guides upon whose honesty and faithfulness reliance might be placed.

In the cool of the evening I made my way to the castle, whose grey battlements crown a steep isolated eminence, the base of which is half encircled by the town. The ascent was by a road practicable for carriages, and was the work of the French. During

the War of Independence this stronghold was carefully fortified by them, and converted into an important post in the line of communication between Andalucia and Estremadura. Hence, from the additions and alterations it underwent in their hands, little remains of the original fortress except the "keep," one or two massive towers at the angles, and the algabe, or reservoir of water. But the imperishable jewel of this ancient place of strength, one which neither the Franc nor Moorish spoiler could deface, was the magnificent view to be enjoyed from the summit of its venerable walls. For extent and variety of scenery, I had as yet seen nothing in Andalucia to compare with it. Far to the south, the eye ranged unobstructed over sierra and plain, till it rested upon a ridge just melting into the horizon; this was the sierra of Carmona, and that town, though distant forty miles, was plainly visible. On a clear day, it is possible for the eye to pierce still further, and to behold the Giralda of Seville rising above the spires of the city; but a hazy mist, caused by the heat, hung like a veil over that quarter, and shrouded that familiar object from my vision. In the immediate neighbourhood of the town the prospect was a rich variety of gardens, olive plan-

tations, and vineyards, intermingled in picturesque confusion, everywhere mounting the surrounding heights, and clinging to their steepest slopes. Looking back in the direction of Cazalla, all was an assemblage of mountain summits, rising above each other in a succession of ridges, till a loftier range surmounted this giant host, and, reflecting back the hue of heaven, was distinguishable only by the serrated edges of its crest and its deeper colours, from the canopy of blue that rested on its peaks. Such a scene, from the absence of every harsh feature, and from the rich tints in which the most prominent objects were clad, was one of exquisite beauty; and accustomed as I was to behold only a sad and stern expression in the scenery of this province, I was the more forcibly struck by the softness that here diffused itself over the landscape, and by the presence of charms I had deemed strangers to the land.

The position of Constantina is undoubtedly high, and a good deal of snow falls in the neighbourhood during winter. This is industriously collected and deposited in an ice-house, for the purpose of being forwarded to Seville. Last winter was one of exceeding mildness, and, in consequence, the usual supplies of snow failed here; so that the Sevillanos

were compelled to seek in the sierra of Ronda the means of concocting the icy compounds and draughts indispensable to existence in a town that may well boast of being the hottest in Spain.

Descending to the town, I strayed to the alameda, which I had already passed through; and visited the source of a streamlet that, bursting forth by a copious spring, waters the principal street of the town, and on the outskirts serves to turn several mill-wheels. This fountain is situated in the garden of the Franciscan convent, adjoining the alameda: the waters gushed forth with great violence, and were collected in a square basin built to receive them. Within the convent another spring issues to the light, and was surrounded with baths for the use of the fraternity; but these, like the other portions of the building, have suffered from the state of neglect to which conventual establishments have been devoted since the suppression of the monastic orders. Lower down, in the course of the brook, the banks become highly picturesque; old-fashioned mills and dwellings, mingled with overshadowing trees, line the stream that dashes at speed over a rocky bed. The oleander, with an abundance of other shrubs, hang over the current, and climb

among grey masses of stone projecting from either side. In the distance, the time-worn castle rises in the hoariness of antiquity, to mingle recollections of the past with this scene, wherein the verdure of nature, and the stir and life of the hurrying waters, are all emblematical of the present.

The couple in whose house I lodged were good-natured and civil, and disposed to render me every service. The master thought it his duty to accompany me everywhere. No sooner did he see me with my hat in hand than he seized his own, and forth we went: whether it was to a tertulia or a stroll was a matter of perfect indifference to him. I suspect he acted under the impression that, without his assistance, I should infallibly be lost in the intricacies of the town—which, by the way, consisted merely of one long street. He is the owner of a small possession, that just yields him a maintenance; yet, with the *dolce far niente* spirit of the land, he is content with this, and aspires to nothing beyond satisfying his daily wants. His property provides him a roof over his head, a cloak and cigar, not to mention a miserable pony, that is stabled in the room next to mine—for so things are managed here: and what more would a genuine son of Andalusia

demand to make life flow without a murmur? Every evening he proceeds to the house of the *estancuero*, or privileged vendor of tobacco, where a kind of *tertulia* is held; and punctually at ten returns to supper. So has he done for years past; so will he do for the future; and thus the sands of his life run out unshaken and untroubled, and its close will be regarded by his fellows as the end of an enviable lot.

Neither in this town nor in Cazalla have the male inhabitants a news-room, or public place of resort; and, strange to say, there is no café. It would be wrong, however, to infer from this fact that the good citizens are devoid of the usual social qualities of their countrymen; in fact, the deficiency in both towns is supplied by substitutes which are rather singular. In Cazalla the point of union is a barber's shop, while a carpenter's does similar duty here. In these, at all hours of the day except those devoted to meals and the *siesta*, might be seen congregated a knot of politicians or group of idlers, busily discussing the affairs of state, and one and all wrestling sore with time. Sometimes, when their numbers are too many for the shop, the party adjourn to the street, and bringing out chairs,

form a wide circle, while one reads the news aloud, or conversation passes round. This, it must be confessed, is a primitive state of things, but it is akin to the humour of the people, who are disposed to court publicity rather than otherwise. At these réunions it rarely happens that the stranger gathers information worth remembering; for, as may be imagined, the chief subjects of discourse refer to local politics or family histories, so that, on the whole, he would do well to avoid them. For myself, the principal source of the amusement I derived was from the queries put to me regarding Inglaterra: these were generally of such a nature as to betray a woful degree of ignorance on the part of the speakers. Geographical knowledge, I need not say, is at the lowest ebb here, and hence I was frequently called upon to rectify the most ludicrous blunders. More than once it was manifest that my questioner was puzzled to tell whether London was in England or England in London; and, in truth, the words are often used synonymously. On one occasion a priest, who had been in Gibraltar, and seen there a regiment of Highlanders in the "garb of old Gaul," volunteered the information that the "regiment in petticoats" was invested with this feminine attire as

a punishment for having misbehaved on the field of battle!

Of course, I fired up at this attack upon the gallantry of my Celtic compatriots, and assured my clerical informant that their costume, so far from being a badge of ignominy, was worn by thousands, and that its origin was so ancient as to be lost in obscurity of history. My explanation, however, was far from shaking his faith in the "weak invention" I have just recorded. Scotland, he understood, was a cold country, and it was, consequently, impossible that a costume so ill-adapted for a northern region should prevail there. In vain I represented that the race by whom it was worn were of hardy frames, and being inured from their infancy to brave in that garb the rigours of the seasons, became insensible in time to the influences of climate. I was listened to with a smile of incredulity, which waxed more and more on my quoting the well-known anecdote of Sir Ewen Cameron, of Lochiel, who reproved his son for effeminacy because the latter used a snowball for his pillow when the twain lay down to pass the night on the snow. To the last the padre continued sceptical; he combated my facts with reasonings as original as his opening

statement; and as the reward for my well-meant endeavours to defend the Gael, I had the satisfaction of finding that he regarded me as a second Baron Munchausen, in consequence of the anecdote to which I have alluded. It was in a somewhat different spirit that another gentleman accosted me, and, prefacing his remarks by professions of high regard for the English nation, proceeded to relate that he could do no less than entertain a warm feeling for them, either as a nation or individuals, inasmuch as it was his boast to possess English blood in his veins. In proof of this statement, he produced a roll of parchment, which on inspection I found was a document from Heralds' College, setting forth that a certain John King, of Wells, Somersetshire, had every right and title to be considered a gentleman. This individual, it appeared, had left his country prior to the year 1610, for reasons unknown to my informant, and established himself in Carmona. There he married, probably, into some house proud of its "*sangue azul*:" on such an occasion proofs of gentle blood would be required ere he could wed the daughter of a "*Christiano viejo y rancio*," and Heralds' College would, therefore, come into requisition. The only offspring of this marriage was a daughter, from whom was descended

my intelligent friend. In connexion with this I may observe, that it is by no means unusual to find throughout Spain families whose ancestors have been natives of Great Britain or Ireland. The latter isle can, however, boast not only of having transplanted more of her children to the soil of Spain than either of the sister kingdoms have done, but of having acquired by the deeds of her off-shoots a degree of renown to which the others cannot aspire. She has been to Spain, what Scotland before the Union was to the Low Countries and Germany—a source of military talent, which, despairing of distinction at home, had to seek its field of fame among the distractions of foreign countries. In that career it is not surprising that the sons of Ireland should have prospered: in a land where there is courage, though rather of a passive than active kind, their impetuous energy and daring could not fail to cut a path to honours; and hence the rise of such men as Sarsefield, the O'Donnells, Flinter, and others of lesser note.

